

# VIDEO AGE

international

In This Issue:

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## L.A. Screenings Extended Int'lly Into Fall Harvest

BY DOM SERAFINI

It has been five long months since L.A. Screenings '08 took place and yet the industry is still ranting about it as if it happened yesterday. But it's not that farfetched since, if not exactly yesterday, it resumed last month and will continue during MIPCOM. It's a sort of sequel, L.A. Screenings, Part II: The Pilots. Only a handful of pilots were screened by the studios last May because of the writers' strike that took place earlier in the year. Some studios were even reduced to making PowerPoint presentations for international buyers who flocked undeterred to L.A. Indeed, in May, 65 new series were announced (versus 110 in 2007) and, of these, only 44 had pilots (versus 66 in 2007).

A few words of appreciation for the buyers are in order here. These past Screenings proved that the notion that acquisition executives go to the L.A. Screenings just for the parties is totally unfounded. This time, they descended onto L.A. well aware that there were no parties, no give-aways and very few



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## Ex Execs Find Reel Work as Consultants

BY LEAH HOCHBAUM ROSNER

In the film and television business, life doesn't end at retirement or when "looking for new opportunities." In fact, in many cases, it starts at those stages — most often, in consulting. And that's when the real work begins. But what exactly does a consultant do? And why are they so in demand? *VideoAge* sought out the folks who've done it and lived to tell the tale.

Consultancy is now an art that is in demand worldwide. We contacted a wide selection of former TV executives in Europe and Canada, but it was mostly the Americans who were willing to speak openly. However, Frank Mulder, who recently retired from his job as a buyer for Holland's Public TV Broadcasting, commented: "It's no use being a consultant in the Netherlands," noting that what buyers want is only to be informed early about upcoming product. "Nowadays, buyers prefer to deal directly with production companies and majors."

As far as money is concerned, a consultant tends to make a good living, with income around \$200,000-plus per year. Jobs are few and far between,

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## New U.S. Season, Int'l Biz Still Reeling From Strike

In July, Fox international distribution announced that it had officially split its 2008 development season into three parts — the first part being the L.A. Screenings in May, the second being another set of screenings that took place in London in

mid-September, and the final part to take place at MIPCOM. The move comes five months after a 100 day-long Hollywood writers' strike that brought the entertainment industry to its knees, forcing U.S. TV networks to order fewer pilots during pilot season. Each U.S. broadcast network had to rethink the way it did business. Then, at the upfronts in New York

in May, NBC, for example, opted to announce its complete 52-week programming strategy, while ABC picked up just two new fall shows. Some studios, including NBC Universal and CBS

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## New TV Directives Are All About What, When & Where

BY BOB JENKINS

Last December, the European Parliament approved the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), a set of rules and regulations for the electronic media that replaces the previous Television Without Frontiers. The new legislation differs from its predecessor in many

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# THE MIDDLE MAN





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New U.S. TV season, international biz still reeling from strike. But have no fear, MIPCOM is here!

New European TV directives are all about what, when and where. Translating them into plain English was the challenge

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**V**enezuela and Florida-based media and entertainment company The Cisneros Group of Companies and China Central Television (CCTV) inked an agreement to distribute content across their respective regions. The deal was finalized in August during the 2008

Chairman of The Cisneros Group, Gustavo Cisneros, cited his company's numerous telenovela properties as the most attractive to CCTV. "We are already providing our popular Latin American soap operas to China which — like many other countries around the world — has a great appetite for this attractive form of international entertainment." Meanwhile, Zhao Hua Yong, president of CCTV, said that he "looks forward to building a cultural exchange between Latin America and China."



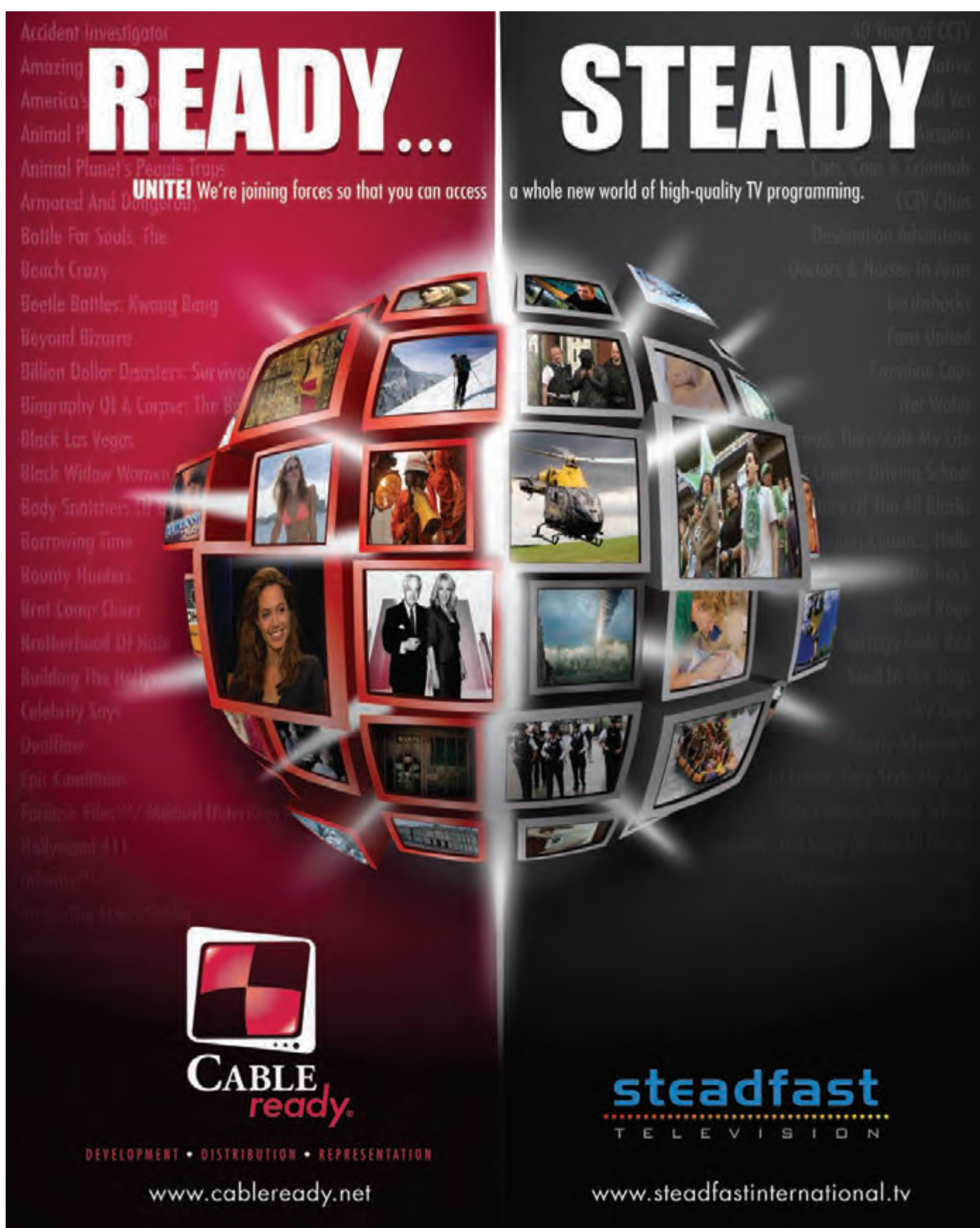
## Murdoch Grows India's Media

**R**upert Murdoch has announced plans to expand his News Corp empire in India. The Australian-American mogul revealed that his media company will invest \$100 million in six new regional TV channels in India. The new channels will join Star TV, News Corp's existing Indian satellite service. Murdoch will launch the channels in the next 12 months, although he has not yet unveiled the cities where they will be based.

## U.S. TV Net Vs. FRAPA

**A** leaked memo to employees of New York-based TV network ABC has caused a stir with the Format Recognition and Protection Agency (FRAPA), a Cologne, Germany-based international organization that safeguards formats. On June 14, 2008, ABC Studios executive vice president Howard Davine sent out a memo to the network's executive producers, which, according to FRAPA's interpretation, hinted that producers should circumvent intellectual property laws.

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published by Los Angeles entertainment industry blog *Deadline Hollywood Daily* in late June, encouraged producers to “carefully scrutinize” whether it is “necessary or appropriate” to license foreign formats. FRAPA, which represents about 100 companies from around the globe, did not directly approach ABC with a formal reprimand. However, the organization issued a press release on August 14 as a slap on the wrist.

“In FRAPA’s view,” said agency chairman Ute Biernat in a statement,

“Davine’s memo can be seen to be encouraging ABC producers and showrunners not to license formats honestly.” ABC responded to FRAPA’s charges, insisting that the memo had been misconstrued. “ABC Studios has been and continues to be committed to the protection of intellectual property and rights holders,” a rep said.

## U.S. Cable Co. Wins TV Rights

In August, the U.S. Court of Appeals made it possible for cable operators to offer customers the option of recording shows to watch whenever they want — without buying a DVR.

The judging panel overturned a district court decision that prohibited Long

Island, New York-based Cablevision from debuting what it’s calling a remote-storage DVR (RS-DVR). The panel agreed with Cablevision execs, who maintained that the system, which would store TV programs on a central server instead of the hard drive inside the set-top box, is the same thing as a DVR, and wouldn’t infringe on the copyrights of program producers.

The judgment shot down an argument by Time Warner’s Turner Broadcasting, which said that Cablevision would reproduce their copyrighted works because it buffers shows before they are transferred to the server where they are stored. The court disagreed, finding that consumers, not Cablevision, would control the recording process.

If this ruling holds up, it could have a huge impact on the U.S. TV industry since cable operators could offer DVR-like services, including rewind and fast-

forward at a fraction of the cost necessary to buy a conventional DVR with a hard drive.

## TV Between Biz, Rome Politics

Officially, the six days of the Roma Fiction Fest began July 7, but it was the RaiTrade reception on July 9 — which introduced pitching sessions — that in effect kicked off the event. The festival was touted as “The market of ideas for TV dramas,” and was held at the Cinema Adriano’s facilities, with free screenings for the public.

With a welcoming cocktail at the Visconti Palace Hotel, RaiTrade, RAI’s Sales division, and the official sponsor of the event, opened the second annual Rome festival for television drama, which, in the words of Italian daily *Il Messaggero*, was “a creation of Piero Marrazzo, the leftist governor of the Lazio Region.”

Indeed, the Rome TV Fest is still a “product” that is more political than industrial. Costing 7.5 Million euro, it was divided between the Lazio Region (four million euro) and Rome County, which are both run by center-left political parties. The municipality of Rome, now with a center-right administration, participated with a symbolic contribution.

Even though this year’s “Fest” only became a reality at the last minute, there has already been talk of next year’s edition, with the idea of expanding it with a mini-fair called “Business Street” in the hopes of recreating what Italy lost with the closing of Milan trade show MIFED. The concept of “Business Street” is borrowed from yet another Roman festival with political undertones, Roma Film Fest, which will be held October 22. The connection between the Fiction Fest and the Film Fest of Rome — which aims to compete with the Venice Film Festival — is Francesco Gesualdi, secretary general of the Lazio Region and former manager of Cinecittà Holding, Italy’s largest film and TV production facility in Rome. Gesualdi also represents the region in



RaiTrade’s Sesto Cifola and vp Alba Calia

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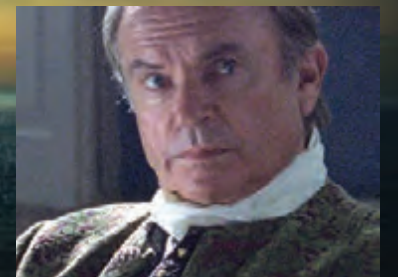
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the Rome Cinema Foundation, which organizes the Roma Film Fest.

At the TV Fiction Fest, an international jury selected 30 finalists from over 100 submitted drama projects. The finalists had to subsequently persuade the professionals to vote their way with a personal pitching presentation.

Among the winners were BBC's *Ten Days to War* in the TV movies' category; KBS' *Hong Gil-Dong*, *The Hiro* in the miniseries category; and Fox Channel's

*Boris 2* for continuing series.

At the Fest, RaiTrade illustrated its new sales structure, which places new Marketing director, Roberto Nepote, directly under president Carlo Nardello. The International Sales division, which remains under Sesto Cifola, is now set up according to territories, including Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and English-speaking countries.

## YouTube Faces Italy, Turkey

Italy's commercial broadcaster, Mediaset, sued YouTube for copyright infringement in civil courts in Rome, London and Los Angeles. As YouTube's main shareholder, Google was also sued. In the suits, Mediaset, which owns three over-the-air channels in Italy —

Canale 5, Italia 1 and Rete 4 — as well as Telecinco in Spain, and Endemol in Holland, is asking for \$500 million in damages, pointing out that these do not include damages due to loss of advertising revenue.

In the past, YouTube faced similar cases with Viacom, France's TF1 and Spain's Telecinco, but, so far, no punitive money has been paid.

According to Mediaset, some 4,643 of its video clips were uploaded to YouTube without permission. These videos represent more than 325 of its channel's programming hours. The Italian media company calculated that those clips uploaded to YouTube subtracted a total of 315,672 days of viewership from its channels, and caused substantial advertising losses.

Meanwhile, in Turkey, YouTube was inaccessible between May and August of this year after a local court banned the site for

having videos it deemed insulting to the memory of Mustafa Kema Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. But in early August, YouTube reached a solution with Turkey's Telecommunications Department. The pair created a version of the website that is unique to Turkey, using a .tr extension. Content deemed insulting to Atatürk, or containing pornography or the promotion of gambling or suicide will be filtered out.

Turkey won't be the first country to have access to YouTube through a specific network. Similar sites for Germany and China are already up and running.

## Digital TV Big in Europe

New statistics show that digital TV service (which includes digital cable, digital satellite and digital terrestrial television) in Western Europe has reached over half of the population.

London-based research firm Informa Telecoms and Media recently published its 12th annual Western European TV Report, which reflected that around 54 percent of households in the region received one of the three kinds of digital television services as of the end of 2007. This figure is up from 42 percent penetration in 2006. Informa also announced predictions that the number of digital television homes in Western Europe will grow to 104 million by the end of this year, and that by 2013, it will reach a 90 percent penetration rate.

Though digital TV services (not to be confused with digital TV sets) is expected to take over Western Europe's market in the next five years, Informa also reported that only four of the region's 15 countries (Finland, France, Ireland and the U.K.) are expected to completely convert to digital over the next year. The other countries will maintain a large number of terrestrial analog cable households until the region-wide switch to digital, which is scheduled for 2011.

At the moment, the U.K has the most booming market for digital TV services, which reaches 25 percent of households. However, France and Germany may soon overtake it, with 20 percent and 17 percent penetration, respectively.

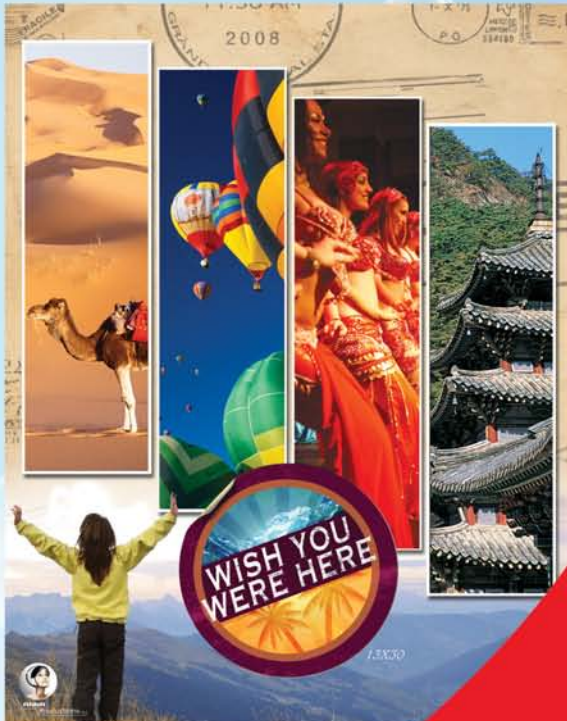
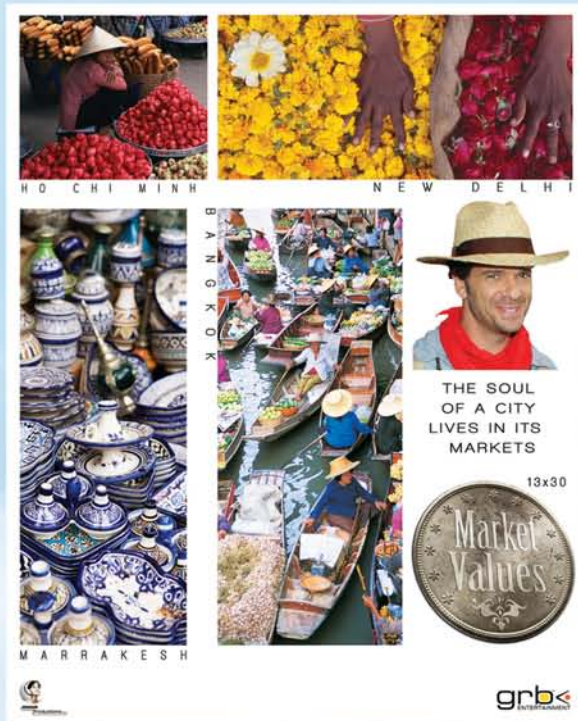
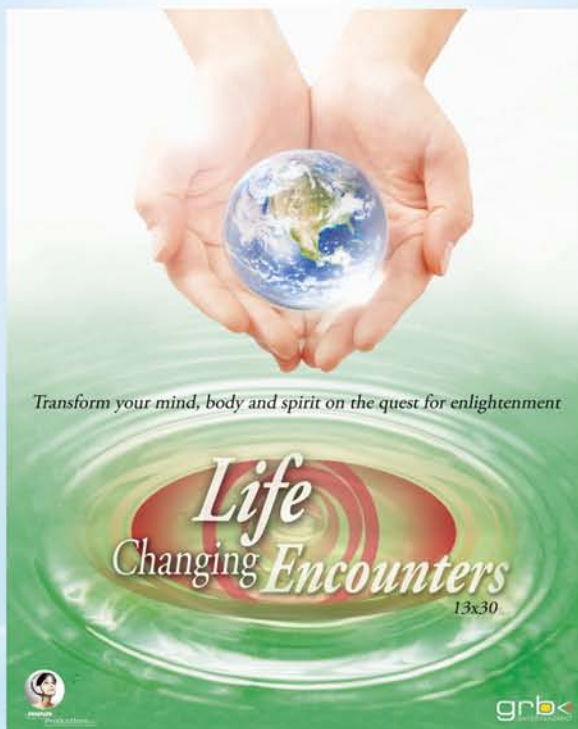
## Famous Quotes

Is it possible that, within the center-left cultural area, there cannot be found a manager, an intellectual, a journalist, capable and competent, without a political party membership card or party affiliation, and worthy of being considered for RAI's board of directors? Why doesn't the Democratic Party have the courage to give a good example? Wouldn't such a gesture force the center-right to do the same? To act differently? Furthermore, could that be a sign of change, a discontinuity with the past, or even a turning point?

Giovanni Valentini

La Repubblica, May 31, 2008

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## Brazilian Hollywood: The Past & Future of Telenovelas

**A**fter years of being the premier TV genre in Latin America, the popularity of telenovelas has spread around the globe. Latin telenovelas are selling like hotcakes, especially to Eastern European broadcasters, while local productions are popping up in almost every territory. *VideoAge* recently caught up with telenovela “guru” Mauro Alencar, to discuss his book, the history of the novela in his native Brazil and why the genre is rising to worldwide prominence.

Now in its second edition, Alencar’s book **A Hollywood Brasileira: Panorama da Telenovela no Brasil**, which translates as **Brazilian Hollywood — A View of the Telenovela in Brazil** (2002, Editora Senac Rio, 175 pages), is unfortunately, for now, only available in Portuguese. When it is finally translated, it will no doubt prove to be a useful educational tool for both fans and producers around the globe.

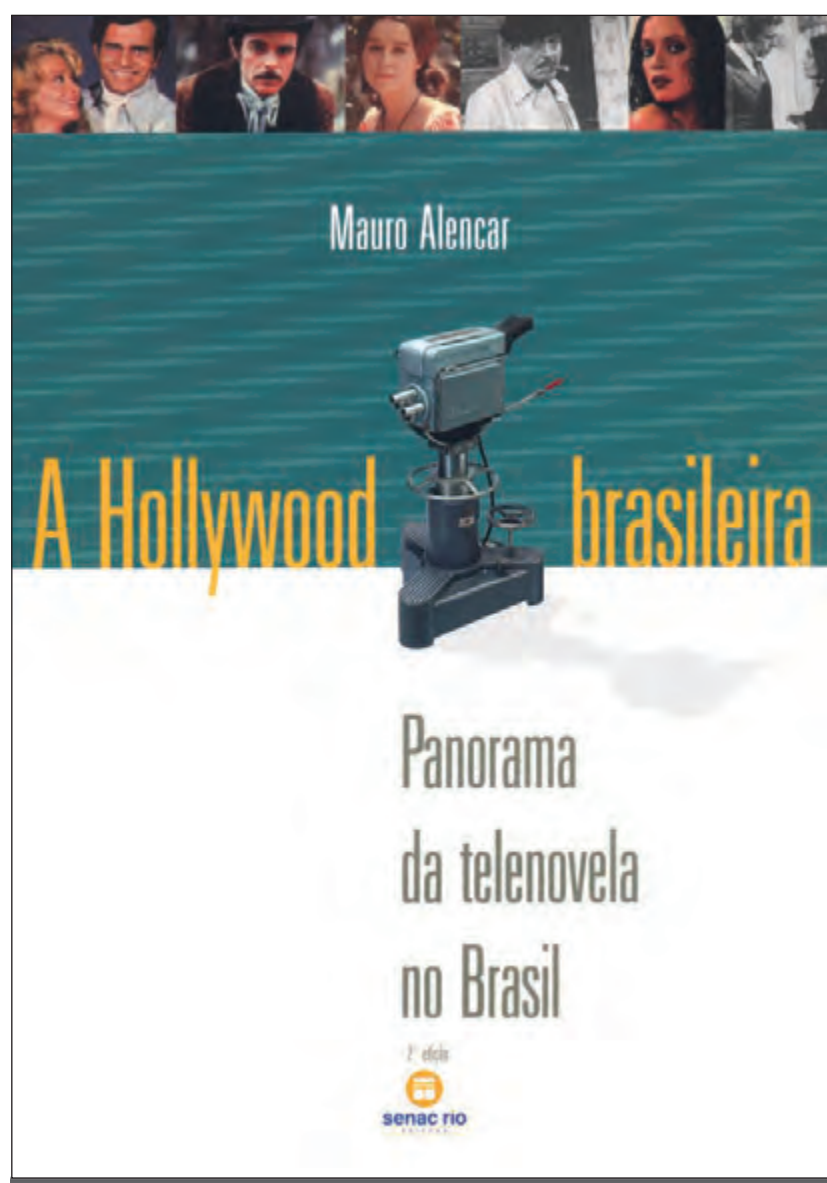
Much like the series it describes, *Brazilian Hollywood* is glossy and attractive. Lush Technicolor photographs of screen shots and production stills accompany the text, and, as a bonus, a CD of 18 musical themes from popular telenovelas is included. The book spans the evolution of the burgeoning genre, beginning with its roots in 19th century “feuilleton” (a term that refers to Spanish, French and Brazilian literature).

As the book reports, as early as the 1930s, the first serialized novelas hit the airwaves in Miami, Florida in the form of “radionovelas” (other accounts give Cuba as radionovelas’ birthplace). They could be distinguished from North American soap operas because they reached a definitive conclusion, while their North American cousins continued for years without an end in sight. Iconic themes of romance, betrayal, and intrigue set them apart from existing soaps and they were instantly popular with Miami’s neighbors to the south, the countries of South and Central America.

Like most of Latin America, Brazil was immediately smitten with telenovelas. But until the 1960s, Brazilian programs largely imitated

Mexican and Argentinean shows, sometimes even reusing scripts from these countries. It was not until the early ’70s that the country’s soaps began to develop an identity of their own. By examining individual programs and their impact on the genre, Alencar takes us through this evolution to the present-day industry boom that has, as the

Examples from shows past and present highlight the elements that set Brazilian novelas apart from those that originate in other Latin countries. Alencar explained that Brazil’s take on the genre has a distinct flavor because it reflects the cultural diversity of the country. “The Brazilian novela presents a very large variety of subjects and



book’s title suggests, created a version of Hollywood completely devoted to telenovelas.

In addition to covering history, the book explores the shows’ structure. As Alencar pointed out in an interview with *VideoAge*, a large portion of the book centers on “text [meaning scripts], production, acting, direction, product merchandising and soundtracks.”

provides distinct glimpses of its people in diversified settings,” he said.

Alencar’s expertise on the genre is rooted in his life-long love of TV. “I have always been fascinated with fiction television, in particular,” he said, citing the early 1970s programs on Globo TV network as his childhood favorites. Alencar credits Globo with modernizing the telenovela by

“portraying the day-to-day lives of [Brazilians] and mixing drama and comedy.” One such program was *Irmãos Coragem*, which combined elements of the Hollywood Western with soccer.

A doctorate in communications as well as innumerable years working in the industry lend authority to Alencar’s analysis in *Brazilian Hollywood*. After receiving multiple degrees in media from the University of São Paulo, Alencar devoted himself exclusively to “the analysis, study and practice of the telenovela.”

Throughout the ’80s and ’90s, Alencar collaborated on articles and books about the genre, including *Memories of the Brazilian Telenovela*, which he wrote with fellow novela expert Ismael Fernandes. Additionally, he was hired as a consultant for telenovelas in Chile and spent 15 years doing telenovela research, helping train actors and working in production at Rede Globo. His body of work is impressive, and spans both print and television.

Despite the fact that telenovelas are purely entertaining, and deal with few serious themes, Alencar was insistent that they have brought only positive attention to Latin America. “The novela has portrayed our society and taken from real-life Latin America the raw material for its construction.” And as telenovelas take the world by storm, these Latin cultures are getting more attention than ever.

When asked about the reason behind the recent popularity of the genre, Alencar pointed to the “daily chapter” format of the shows. The ongoing sagas hook viewers and “create a deep, affectionate bond with those who watch them.” At the end of the day, however, the worldwide interest in telenovelas goes back to engaging storytelling and quality product.

As for the future of telenovelas in the global arena, Alencar was optimistic. “The world is discovering the telenovela,” he said. “At the moment it goes far beyond the territory of Latin America, and inside that promising present I see a cooperation and the potential for collaboration between producing countries.” As a historian, industry professional, and simply a fan, Alencar looks forward to seeing where this exciting cultural phenomenon is headed. **ES** ●

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## Portuguese-language Nations Meet to Seek TV Understanding

**T**he highlight of the ninth annual Brasil TV Forum, which ended June 5 in São Paulo's Frei Caneca Convention Center, was the first ever "Portuguese-Speaking Broadcasters' Meeting," which was held at the nearby Novotel Jaragua hotel.

Reportedly, this meeting represents a precedent, as there have never been any other similar gatherings among broadcasters of Portuguese-speaking nations, although Portuguese is the world's sixth most spoken language. Broadcasters arrived at the Forum from all nine of the world's Portuguese-speaking nations, including Angola, East Timor and Mozambique. They congregated at a series of five general meetings to discuss technological innovations and co-production opportunities. From Brazil, most of the major TV networks were present, including Rede Globo, Bandeirantes, TV Record, TV Cultura and new cultural network, TV Brasil. Notably absent, however, were other major Brazilian TV groups, such as SBT and Rede TV.

The message that the other former Portuguese colonies brought to Brazil is the importance of paying attention to their needs, especially in the form of content. Portugal's television industry has been generous toward its former colonies. Brazil, on the other hand, tends to ignore former colonies, focusing instead just on Portugal, and the results are clearly visible. While a former British colony such as the U.S. has, for example, managed to spread American English worldwide, the Brazilians, despite their country's might, do not exert any influence and even have a hard time understanding the Portuguese-language spoken in other former colonies.

This year's Brasil TV Forum occupied double the space of last year's edition and brought together broadcasters and producers from more than 30 countries to network, share experiences and find content. Organizers moved the event to a different floor at the centrally located Frei Caneca Convention Center, hoping to make things more comfortable for attendees.

The Latin-flavored Forum drew roughly 1,200 participants — mostly



The Italian contingent with VideoAge's Dom Serafini

hailing from Brazil, but with international contingents from Canada, and for the first time this year, a delegation of eight producers from Italy, seven from Spain and 10 from Uruguay.

At the opening cocktail reception, which officially kicked off the three-day event, prizes were awarded to Brazilian production house Flamma for its children's cartoon series *Princess do Mar*, to HBO for a large number of original productions made in Latin America; to Brazilian TV network RBS (Rede Brasil Sul de Comunicação) for encouraging local production; to author Janete Clair, in memoriam, for her contributions to Brazilian dramaturgy;

and to Colombia's Fernando Gaitan, creator of *Ugly Betty*, which has become a hit in many countries, including the U.S. A lifetime achievement award saluted program sales veteran Roberto Filippelli, credited with the introduction of Rede Globo's telenovelas first to Italy in the late 1970s, and later to the rest of the world, including China, in 1983. Besides the opening ceremony, Brazil's own TV Globo organized the only other cocktail reception at the event.

Organizers of the Forum, including André Mermelstein, are hopeful that the number of Brazilian co-productions will soar due to new tax incentives that



Portuguese-language broadcasters:

Angola: TPA; Brazil: TV Globo, TV Record, TV Cultura, TV Brasil; Cape Verde: RCTV; Guinea-Bissau: TGB; Macao: TVM; Mozambique: TVM, STV; Portugal: SIC, RTP; São Tomé and Príncipe: TVS; East Timor: RTTL



VideoAge was one of the sponsors of the Forum

should soon be in place, which are designed to encourage TV channels to partner with independent producers in Brazil. Article 3 of the new Audiovisual Law allows foreign companies that sell or license programming to invest 70 percent of withholding tax due in the development or co-production of independent features, shorts, series or documentaries. The National Film Agency (ANCINE) still needs to implement the rule, however locals expect it to happen in the next few months. But even before the new incentives are available, there was big news of a co-partnership coming out of the Forum. Globo TV announced the renewal of its partnership with Portugal's SIC for another four years. The deal gives SIC the exclusive rights to exhibit all new soap operas produced by Globo until 2012. It covers only the purchase and sale of soaps — not programming of any other kind.

At the Frei Caneca Center, on the market side, there were 18 exhibitors. The conference was comprised of six panels, three pitch sessions, 20 meetings (including the much-anticipated "30 Minutes With..." sessions in which directors discussed their programming and acquisition policies, as well as offered tips for producers and distributors on how best to pitch projects to acquisition execs), and a record 83 screenings.

Because São Paulo is not too attractive a city and is strangled by traffic (it is said that, in five years time, the city traffic will grind to a standstill), earlier this year, Forum Brasil organizers announced plans to move the event to Rio de Janeiro in 2009. But during the market, they said that the plan has, for now at least, been scrapped. This is mostly likely because, with its 10.8 million inhabitants, São Paulo is not only Brazil's main TV market, but also the country's financial and broadcasting center. Dates for next year's event have not yet been set, but Forum Brasil 2009 will most likely take place in early June. ●

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(10 x 30')

## Market's Growing Pains Leave Attendees Glowing

**T**he NATPE-ization of DISCOP, which was held in Budapest, Hungary, June 18-20, has started showing its effects, now that U.S.-based market, NATPE, has finally taken over, bringing its supervisory expertise to the conference. The growth of this Central and Eastern European market has been described as phenomenal, to the point where, if not kept under control, it is said that it could turn out to be problematic.

With 1,729 total participants (up from 1,522 in 2007) one could clearly see the market growth everywhere — from the added fourth floor, to the new tables in the basement, to the longer corridors with more hotel suites turned into sales offices at the Sofitel.

For some distributors, such as Germany's Bavaria Media, DISCOP has become so important that, according to its head of Distribution, Oliver Kreuter, it requires the premiering of new shows, just like MIP-TV and MIPCOM.

But many exhibitors had hoped that the growth was going to be organic and not pumped-up. Already, signs of growing pains showed up in services such as shipping, AV readiness and hotel reservations. Some exhibitors also worried that the ratio of sellers to buyers cannot remain as it has been, tilted toward the buying side. Indeed, the major challenge for DISCOP's organizers could be how to manage growth.

At least two resourceful exhibitors, Italy's Mondo TV and Canada's The Fremantle Corp., posted copies of *VideoAge* open to their ads as replacements for brochures that were stuck in customs.

Other than that, the market was good for most participants, many of whom were looking forward to attending DISCOP Africa, to be held in Dakar, Senegal, February 25-27, 2009. Among the main events there is a planned meeting of all French-language African TV networks. At press time, more than 200 companies had already signed up as exhibitors.



Part of the Italian contingent in attendance at a dinner organized by the Italian ambassador to Hungary during DISCOP East

Going back to DISCOP East, one observation had been that Budapest has become a very expensive city, and perhaps a thought should be given to moving the market further East to Bucharest, Romania in 2010 since distributors have contracts for the Sofitel's venue through 2009. Reportedly, Romania could offer at least 40 percent savings and, according to one Romanian buyer, the market could be held at the Marriott Hotel. DISCOP organizers have already been approached by several people about this move and it seems that they are giving it

some thought.

Meanwhile, DISCOP East '08 exhibitors — specifically, Latin American companies — were happy with their sales, as they were among the first to harvest the riches of the Central and Eastern European TV market. Indeed, DISCOP's Latin presence was so predominant that it has developed a flourishing Spanish-language TV publishing trade sector, even though the language is not spoken among buyers.

In addition to the big Latin American contingent, other large groups of sellers came from Spain, with 20 companies;



Televisa's Claudia Silva, GMD's Pedro Font

Italy, with 18 exhibitors, of which 12 were under the Italian Trade Commission umbrella; and France, whose companies were under TV France International's umbrella.

The success of this DISCOP could be gauged by early Friday morning of the market during *VideoAge's* breakfast meeting, sponsored by DISCOP, which attracted more people than usual, even though it was held on the market's last day. This is when, customarily, most participants have left or are busy packing or recuperating from the previous night's late-ending HBO party, which traditionally keeps many in bed well into the afternoon.

Among the parties to remember were the yearly Dori Media cocktail, the opening reception, Hungarian TV's gala party and a dinner offered by the Italian ambassador to Hungary for the large Italian contingent and its guests.

Over 400 exhibitors and more than 1,000 buyers participated in the 15th annual DISCOP East '08. Buyers came from 33 Central and Eastern European countries, while a record 108 sales executives, out of a total of 596, came from the region. DISCOP 2009 will be held June 17-19 at the same venue. ●



A view of the Sofitel's exhibition area



Mediaset's Sonia Danieli, Bavaria Media's Helge Koehnen



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(121 x 30')

## TV Takes A Backseat At Troubled Trade Show

BY ERIN SOMERS

**W**restling icon Vince McMahon, *Family Guy* creator Seth McFarlane and political activist Jesse Jackson delivered keynotes at this year's 53rd annual Promax BDA conference, which ended June 19 at the New York Hilton, in Manhattan.

Promax is a Los Angeles-based non-profit organization for marketing professionals, while BDA, also based in L.A., is an association of broadcast and multimedia designers. The two organizations have a combined membership of about 3,000 companies, and have been united almost from the beginning, though they maintain two separate boards.

The general consensus among attendees of the associations' main annual event was that although the convention's three headliners were all engaging, the three-day conference was disappointing, at least for TV marketing professionals in attendance. For those who had shunned the event in droves, the outcome was, one could assume, predictable.

While in the past, Promax has been an important event for television promotion gurus, this year's edition in particular seemed to be targeted at new media companies and composed more of flashy gimmicks than informative TV sessions.

Despite rising attendance figures, startlingly few TV-related exhibitors were on hand and even fewer TV promotions executives graced the mostly empty floor of the Hilton.

In an interview, recently appointed association president Jonathan Block-Verk boasted that Promax "has seen participation go up, while other conferences have seen it go down." However, only 31 exhibitors (of which 19 were only loosely TV-related) could be found in booths in the Networking Village and kiosks outside the grand ballroom, and only nine companies set up shop in suites. The booths were occupied primarily by Web-based music companies like Musicbox and Rumblefish, as well as new media promotion firms. A few venerable giants, including ESPN, MTV, Sony and Warner Brothers, represented the television sector, albeit in a low-key manner.

According to Block-Verk, Promax's new emphasis on Internet-based marketing is a response to the changing face of the entertainment industry. He explained that, in the technology and effects-driven world of promotion, the Web is becoming increasingly important. "Of course we've talked about the Internet before at Promax," he said, "But this year we're talking about innovation, we're talking about what the Internet means to the business and how you can use it and what opportunities are out there." And although Promax seems to be in a period of evolution from a TV-based event to a new media-centric conference, Block-Verk is confident that "it continues to lead the international conversation on the role of marketing, promotion and design."

On opening day, Block-Verk summed up Promax's shifting focus best. "As an industry, we're at a crossroads of the most challenging, but also the most exciting time in the history of entertainment...it's not about television — it's about entertainment and information content marketing." Block-Verk's speech was followed by remarks by Seth McFarlane, the young creator, producer and writer of popular animated series *Family Guy*. Though McFarlane's humorous commentary was highly enjoyable, the speech was more of a stand-up routine than a look at the promotional tactics that have made his series a hit.

Similarly unrelated was a Q&A session with U.S. political activist, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, hosted by a CNN news anchor. Jackson talked at length about Barack Obama's battle during the primaries, but didn't say anything about the links between campaign promotion and television marketing, a logical anticipation at such gatherings.

The most relevant of the three speakers was World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) top man Vince McMahon, who was presented with a well-deserved Promax BDA Lifetime Achievement Award. At the ceremony, the ever-humble wrestling bigwig said, "I really appreciate this extraordinary award. And you'll probably never hear anyone else say this, but I really deserve it."

Indeed, as one of the conference workshops "Case Study: Wrestlemania — 24 Years of Excitement," clearly demonstrated, McMahon and his team

have used marketing and promotion to build a multi-million-dollar empire that encompasses television, print, licensing, and live events.

When asked what makes for a good promotion, McMahon remarked, "You first and foremost want to be in touch with your audience and communicate with them on their level. Audiences appreciate creativity and honesty. The WWE brand is so flexible, so malleable, that we can do anything. But the most important thing is to create content that is contemporary and interests our audience."

McMahon also explained the reasons why the WWE brand has been so successful internationally. "The product is easily understood," he said, "But we have to change branding for each individual country." For example, the company takes into account the cultural sensitivity in each region, like the aversion to sexuality in the Middle East and the distaste for violence in Europe.

Aside from McMahon's speech, only a handful of panels and workshops, out of a total 70 sessions, managed to address good old-fashioned television. Sessions that drew the TV crowd were the "30 Minutes With..." dialogues that gave audience members direct access to some of the design and marketing industry's leaders. The roster of participants included Adam Stotksky, svp, Marketing and Brand Strategy, NBC Universal Sci Fi; Jakob Trollback, founder and creative director of Trollback + Company; Douglas Scott, senior partner/president of Ogilvy Entertainment; Lee Hunt, president of Lee Hunt LLC; and Dave Martin, director, Interactive Media, Ignited.

Additionally "The Network Television CMO Summit" brought together a roundtable of some of the leading broadcast TV marketers in the U.S., including executives from ABC and CBS. The panel discussed the difficulties of promoting programs to audiences who have seen it all. "The challenge for us," said ABC's Michael Benson, "is how do we take the formats we traditionally have and break through those." It was challenges like this that, in years past, used to be at the center of Promax conferences.

Finally, in one of the most informative presentations, "Deciphering Digital



Vince McMahon accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award

Transition," Barry Goodstadt, senior vice president of Los Angeles-based Centris, a media market research firm, presented new findings on the decline of over-the-air (OTA) households. "An analysis of Centris data collected since early 2004 shows that the number of OTA households has declined from nearly 24 million to about 17 million in first quarter 2008, a loss of seven million OTA households," said Goodstadt. "We estimate that with consumer choice information and the evidence of potential reception problems factored in, this number could drop to between four to five million once the transition has ended. This substantial reduction in the number of OTA households has serious implications for broadcasters and the TV industry."

In other words, the transition to digital television may result in viewers' reevaluation of how they receive their local television. And up to 13 million households might decide to get rid of off-air reception in favor of cable or satellite. If and when this happens, towers and transmitters that are currently aimed at a diminishing number of OTA viewers will be devalued, resulting in lower stock prices. Also, government regulators might have to change their views in respect to broadcast spectrum that will be used to reach only a handful of people.

Of the few U.S. studios that did attend, all declined to comment on whether the importance of Promax is diminishing for television executives. Additionally, the Italian, French, German and British contingents, including promotion executives from major U.K. TV companies, were nowhere to be found. This is despite official figures that claimed attendance from 48 different countries. Promax will return to the New York Hilton in June of 2009. The exact dates of the conference are yet to be finalized. ●

Leah Hochbaum Rosner contributed to this story.



# Ruby



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(8 x 30')  
(1 x 60')

# Europe's Film Commissions

## Filmed Ent. Is More Than Just Big Biz For Europe

BY MARIA ZUPPELLO

**F**ilm commissions are government organizations (national, regional and local) set up to attract the production of movies, TV programs and commercials to their respective locations. They offer services such as scouting locations and assistance cutting through local bureaucracies. In addition, some provide hard economic incentives, such as tax rebates, hotel discounts and even actual cash.

The first film commissions were created in the U.S. more than 50 years ago. Now they are commonplace, especially in Canada and Europe. In March 2007, a new network, the European Film Commission Network (EuFCN) was set up, uniting 64 national film commissions from more than 18 countries. Austrian Arie Bohrer of Vienna's Location Austria — part of the country's government-backed film commission — was elected president of the network. The aim is to set new standards for the positioning of Europe's film commissions, to position them into a more international market, and to promote the exchange of information between members.

In an audiovisual industry expected to grow worldwide to \$105 billion over the next three years, Europe has become a welcoming locale for filming. This has happened despite the weak dollar, which discourages U.S. production and, at the same time, makes the U.S. a more economically attractive venue for European production.

*VideoAge* reviewed a selection of key film commissions around Europe.

### CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Film Commission (<http://www.filmcommission.cz>) has worked, since 2004, as part of the Czech Film Center, partly funded by the Czech Ministry of Culture, and was created in September 2002 to promote Czech film abroad.

Since 1989, the Czech Republic, whose movie industry annually attracts \$83 million from abroad, has become renowned for its wide variety of locations, well-equipped studio facilities and lower costs of production, wages and taxes.

Barrandov Studios in Prague boasts some of the country's most important facilities, bringing in by far the biggest share of moviemaking revenue, valued at roughly \$300 million annually. Barrandov's new sound stages were

completed in 2006, and filmmakers have since come in droves. Much of the most recent James Bond movie *Casino Royale* was shot on Barrandov's sound stages. Earlier this year, Barrandov Studios signed a contract to host Paramount's \$170 million *GI Joe*, one of the most expensive films ever in the Czech studio's history, falling between the estimated \$150 million *Casino Royale* and the \$180 million *Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

But other Eastern European countries are siphoning off business from the Czech Republic (foreign spend dropped 65-70 percent between 2002 and 2007) with incentives and tax breaks. Bulgaria is clearly star-struck, bending over backward to promote its massive Boyana studio, a holdover from the Cold War that nevertheless beat out Prague for *The Black Dahlia*, with Bulgaria standing in for 1940s Los Angeles. Meanwhile, Hungary is competing with hefty tax incentives for foreigners that Prague film people have been trying unsuccessfully to wring out of the Czech government for years.

### FRANCE

Regional and local commissions have flowered nationwide. One, Ile de France, offered \$22.9 million last year to French and foreign productions shooting 50 percent in the Paris region. France counts on new factors in its hope to acquire shoots: an impressive film commission infrastructure, Film France (<http://www.filmfrance.net>), globalization, and a leap in computer-generated imagery and visual effects abilities. Film France's website offers 124 abbeys and 101 battlements, ordered by century, in which to film.

### GERMANY

Germany's film commissions (<http://www.location-germany.de>) are a network of 10 regional commissions, which reproduce the same federal structure of the country.

Germany has recently made headlines because of *Valkyrie*, a movie in which Tom Cruise plays a true-life German World War II hero. *Valkyrie* is considered the country's most relevant movie filmed there in the last 12 months. The German government issued \$6.5 million in subsidies for the project, hoping to diminish the furor over the country's initial refusal to allow filming at a memorial site located within the Defense Ministry complex. *Valkyrie*'s budget has

been estimated at \$80 million, with about two-thirds of that being earmarked for filming in Germany.

The German government has also resolved to provide \$94 million in aid annually for the production of movies in Germany. The intent is to provide support for film production over a period of three years. The German government will reimburse each production company in Germany that produces a film and applies for assistance for costs incurred while producing the film in Germany. The measure is not intended to just benefit large productions. Companies with smaller and mid-sized projects with budgets of \$1.5 million or more for feature films can also apply for partial reimbursement of production costs.

### IRELAND

One of the fastest growing film commissions is the Northern Ireland Screen (<http://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk>), with many areas of activity, including funding, locations, services, facilities, exhibition, audience development, education and business support. Northern Ireland Screen (NIS) is funded by Invest Northern Ireland, the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, and the U.K. Film Council, and is delegated by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to administer lottery funding in Northern Ireland. Since 1997, 36 movies have been filmed there.

Northern Ireland Screen's greatest asset for attracting foreign productions is the Paint Hall studio. Five minutes from Belfast, the studio was constructed in the 1970s and originally used to paint ships in climate-controlled conditions. It was occupied last year by Walden Media/Playtone for the production of their \$50 million fantasy movie *City of Ember* with Tim Robbins, the most expensive movie ever to shoot in Ulster. Set designer Martin Laing stated, "We went to Romania, Prague and Germany trying to find a very large place where we could build an entire city. That brought us to the studio in Belfast. It has allowed us to build the city we wanted."

NIS contributed £800,000 (\$1.6 million) toward the budget, its maximum grant. That proved an astute investment. *City of Ember* spent \$18.2 million in the city, employed a local crew and left behind a functioning film studio where previously there was just an empty shell. Northern Ireland Screen bought back the rigging and took a three-year lease on the building. It's offering the studio for free, along with

investments of up to \$1 million, to any production that promises to spend at least \$4 million in the province. Expenditure also qualifies for the U.K. tax credit, which can knock another 20-25 percent off the cost. In total, NIS has roughly \$24 million a year to spend.

### ITALY

The Italian Association of Film Commissions was established in 2003. It works with the Italian Film Commission based in Los Angeles, a division of the Italian Trade Commission. Up until now, it has connected 16 film commissions all across the country. "We mainly work for the Italian audiovisual industry, mostly television," said Andrea Rocco, president of the Italian Association of Film Commissions. "In the last two years American production has dropped."

Nevertheless, some producers are leaving Italy in favor of other locales, like Bulgaria. Many factors can explain the shift. Despite ongoing discussions between film industry representatives and the Italian government, there is no tax shelter legislation similar to that on offer in many other countries. Plus, Italy has relatively high costs of production compared to other European locations, particularly the emerging Eastern European centers. The country's film production spend in 2007 was \$496 million — much less than the respective \$1.53 billion and \$1 billion in France and Germany, where tax credits drive vibrant industries.

### SPAIN

The Spain Film Commission (<http://www.spainfilmcommission.org>) was established on March 26, 2001 and has its premises at the Instituto de Ciencias y Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA). The promotion of Spain as a location for productions is growing, thanks to three new studios.

Ciudad de la Luz studio, a \$442.5 million juggernaut in Cadiz, Alicante, was launched in 2005 in the hopes of bringing more Hollywood coin to Iberia. Some of the films made at the complex were the \$118 million *Astérix and the Olympic Games* and Jean-Jacques Annaud's \$53 million comedy *His Majesty Minor*. Even Bollywood producers visited the complex last spring for new business. Backed by Valencia's regional government, Ciudad will be totally completed by 2009.

But Ciudad could face growing competition from Madrid. In Loeches, a small town northeast of the capital city, a new complex covering 49 acres called Ciudad del Audiovisual will host production facilities, offices, soundstages, a film school, hotels and a shopping mall. A private-sector project, it's scheduled to open in 2011.

And in the Basque town of Oiartzun, near San Sebastian, construction began last September on Zinealdea, an 893,400-square-foot production center funded with public and private money. Zinealdea should be ready mid-2009. The complex's three buildings will host film and TV studios, production services, offices, a film school, a film commission and a leisure area.

(Continued on Page 64)

OCTOBER 2008

# Good stories have no frontiers

## PROGRAMS

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## Nickeled and Dimed By Hotels, Airlines

**M**ost people in the film and TV business would gladly do away with the “glamour” of traveling. Just imagining a stopover at Heathrow or Dallas-Fort Worth airport is enough to make an executive shiver. It seems that today’s airports are set up to slow you down and will do anything possible to make the visit unbearable. But the unfriendliness of airports is not the only problem. Travelers are also confronted by high airline fares and hotel rates, combined with lower-quality services and a less accommodating attitudes.

On top of this, there is a general tendency for all involved in the travel industry to nickel and dime consumers to the point of exasperation. There are reports that, in addition to the infamous \$4 cup of coffee, some hotels now charge “cleaning fees.” In one reported case in the *Miami Herald*, a hotel guest paid \$95 per night for a room, plus a \$166 cleaning fee. This fee is usually indicated in fine print, and goes mostly unseen by travelers, but is rarely refunded by the reservation agency or credit card company.

Not to be outdone, airlines now charge for extra luggage, food, drinks, earphones, movies, blankets and, if available, on-board Internet service. Plus, to punish passengers even more, airlines have made trips longer by slowing down to a speed comparable to that of a German driver on the Autobahn. Airlines such as Jet Blue stand to save \$6.8 million a year by lengthening their flights by just one minute.

This sad state of affairs in the traveling sector forces entertainment professionals to travel less and rely instead on conventions and trade shows, where executives can meet a number of clients in one setting. For this reason conventions continue to grow in number. Recently, Rome TV Market and Florida Media Market joined the convention circuit and, in 2009, DISCOP Africa and possibly an organized market for the Toronto Film Festival, will both debut.

The inhospitability of airports is out of this world. Passengers face long lines at check-in counters and even longer

lines at security points, where people wait to disrobe before slow-moving security guards.

Once finally inside the boarding area, few electrical outlets leave execs unable to plug in laptops, and the cost of Wi-Fi service is often an outright scam. Most airports offer Internet service in increments of 24 hours, disregarding the fact that no one remains at the airport for more than a few hours. And it’s not unusual to find, like at the Budapest Airport, that after being overcharged, the password doesn’t even work! Naturally, everything costs more at airports, from the bottled water to the mass transit tickets to and from nearby cities. To the transport industry, passengers seem to just be hapless chumps waiting to be bled dry of all their money.

Naturally, finding a decent restaurant at an airport is like searching for a Yeti. Only fast food stands are available and, when one is lucky enough to find a restaurant with sit-down service, it tends to be closed at lunch or dinner time (e.g., Delta terminals at JFK). Once passengers are taken to the cleaners by airports, the suckers are turned over to airlines to be further plucked.

Starting June 15, American Airlines was the first to begin charging customers a fee to check luggage. Passengers are now expected to pay \$15 for a single bag and \$25 for two. Other airlines were

quick to follow suit. Likewise, in lieu of a complimentary in-flight meal, airlines like Delta now offer a pay menu, with \$8 and \$9 entrées and \$3 snacks. In the past, passengers were sometimes required to pay a headset fee to see a movie. Today, airlines charge for the headset, which has shrunk into an earpiece, as well as for each individual movie.

JetBlue provides the most preposterous example of the trend: flight attendants collect \$7 for a pillow and blanket. Customers on flights longer than two hours are invited to buy the so-called “World’s Cleanest Travel Kit,” which includes an eco-friendly pillow and blanket and a coupon to home furnishing store Bed Bath & Beyond.

Neal Lloyd, hotel coordinator for the Los Angeles Screenings, which takes place in May, pointed out that another headache comes in the form of hotel cancellation policies, which can be costly for market participants. Block reservations can be subject to cancellation fees as high as \$10,000 for a 170-room reservation. Lloyd also stressed that hotel management changes, which are even more abundant than airline buy-outs, can be a nightmare for both market organizers and participants.

One of the biggest factors influencing globetrotting execs is the U.S. recession. The international repercussions of the ailing U.S. economy have not been all bad, especially for Europeans visiting the U.S. But within the U.S., the

declining dollar has changed the way TV companies approach markets. Lloyd suggested that the exchange rate has caused many firms to reevaluate the importance of conferences outside the U.S. “Internationally, the weakness of the dollar has affected us,” he said. “U.S. TV companies, for example, are looking at budgets and making some cutbacks. They’ve been forced to decide which shows overseas give them a bigger bang for their buck.”

But while the weak dollar has put a damper on the convention plans of U.S. companies and taken a toll on Americans abroad, it has caused an influx of international travelers to the U.S. The strength of the euro, the British pound and Asian currencies over the U.S. dollar have made conferences in America more attractive to foreign execs.

Marizta Guimet, organizer of Miami’s Florida Media Market, which will take place at the Alexander Hotel October 23-25, told *VideoAge* that attendance figures were up because of the falling dollar. “So far, interest has been much greater than last year, especially from the international crowd,” she said. Lloyd noted a similar trend at his event, observing that at 2008’s L.A. Screenings, many European execs “stayed on longer.”

Patrick Jucaud, organizer of DISCOP East, which was held this year in Budapest in June, explained that Europeans and Latin Americans made up a large portion of DISCOP participants. Additionally, Jucaud noted “the impact of higher travel, marketing, and currency exchange costs is negligible if one compares it to the fast-growing value of the Central and Eastern European television content marketplace.” Simply put, nowadays, to be able to afford traveling, companies have to sell more.

But with airlines constantly inventing unique ways to empty their consumers’ pockets, organizers will have to work overtime to bring the crowds to their events. Jucaud and his team have so far avoided losing participants through careful research. “Our research department follows the growth of the region very closely in order to identify new buyers and get them to the event,” he said. If they hope to combat the growing nuisance of travel, other market coordinators would be wise to do the same.

In the final analysis, the travel sector has been negatively affected by deregulation. On one hand it created a laissez-faire system, for which travelers are paying the price in terms of safety — as recently demonstrated when the FAA (the U.S. airline authority) grounded an aircraft deemed unfit to fly — and the airlines are paying in terms of more artificially created competition. **ES** ●



“All those in favor of moving this meeting to the South of France, say aye!”

# MONSTERS & PIRATES

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# GLADIATORS

## The New TV Buzz Word: Buzz Marketing

BY VALERIE MILANO

**M**y digital video recorder (DVR) is chock full of programs and only the “buzz” from my friends and family seems to be able to convince me to start watching new broadcast shows. I zip through television commercials because I am older and just plain tired of being pitched to. I have countless science shows on my DVR (O.K., I am the mother of two children). I’m also supposed to Tivo *Ugly Betty* (O.K., my friends are mostly gay). I have come to rely on my trusted social network to guide my TV and movie viewing.

I have just laid out, in a nutshell, why buzz marketing works. Buzz marketing is a technique designed to make every encounter with a consumer appear to be a spontaneous, personal exchange of information rather than a calculated pitch from an advertiser. We are most influenced by the people around us and the people we look up to. We are moved into action by our social needs to be in communication with, and be a part of what is going on. Buzz marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, stealth marketing (a practice designed to deceive consumers about marketers’ involvement) and viral marketing (a phenomenon that encourages people to pass along a marketing message) are all put to use by the good folks who want you to watch their entertainment programming.

The buzz-makers reach us on the Web sites we visit, the coffee houses we frequent, the videos from user-generated content sites, such as YouTube, that are forwarded to us on our cell phones. It’s smart and it’s effective. If programmers can orchestrate a permeating chatter, they can create overnight sensations, like that now-ancient *The Blair Witch Project*. In effect, buzz-makers have wedged their strategy into the vernacular of a generation at very little expense.

On the other hand, stealth marketing is a trickier business. Once consumers figure out that they’re being pitched to, well it’s a turn-off, or a betrayal,



Laurel Bernard, svp of Marketing at Fox

depending on how dramatic they are. At times TV makes use of stealth marketing. The *Gossip Girl* enthusiast who is chatting with you or posting a comment on a *Gossip Girl* fansite could very well work for the show (and often does, by the way). After all, these sites spring up rather quickly and adeptly. This stealth marketing tactic is very smart and very effective and it taps into an old-fashioned social paradigm. It’s the chat with “my neighbor over the fence.” It brings us back to what we already know and trust.

Viral marketing works somewhat differently. Imagine that I work for an ad agency and I’m pitching a TV commercial idea to my chocolate manufacturer client. “O.K., there’s this gorilla, he’s sitting behind a drum set just listening, for example, to the music of former Genesis superstar Phil Collins. And then the gorilla starts playing the drums.

Does that sound crazy? It might, but this was an actual commercial spot from Cadbury for its Dairy Milk candy bar. Rather than feature the product, it simply aimed to entertain audiences and get them to sign online to find out more about the ad and the product it was pushing. And once one person looked it up and told his friends, he got his friends to check it out and so on. This spot quickly became an Internet sensation in 2007 and had people

talking about whether or not it was in fact Collins himself in that gorilla suit. It wasn’t, but it was definitely a brilliant viral marketing move.

This new marketing paradigm is a godsend for U.S. public television network PBS because its programming lends itself to Internet search engines. Indeed, PBS’s best friends could very well be search engines like Google. The PBS website gets 11 million visitors per month — that’s a 25 percent increase from 2007. It had seven million views on its kids’ site this past May. According to Virginia-based Kevin Dando, PBS’s director of Online Communications, once a visitor has checked the PBS website, he is much more likely to become a PBS viewer within that week. Dando’s strategy is to put promotions for PBS where people already are. Outdoor billboards kind of do that too but there is a sense of control you feel when you are clicking the buttons rather than having the buttons (i.e., the marketers) clicking you. Dando is against stealth marketing. He wants to be transparent. Of course, he’s got a respected product in PBS that is linked with educators throughout the U.S.

Nevertheless, PBS has a presence on social networking sites Facebook and Twitter, music-buying site iTunes, as well as YouTube and countless blogs.



Michael Benson of ABC Entertainment



John Miller of NBC Universal

Michael Benson, Los Angeles-based co-evp of Marketing for ABC Entertainment, had this to say: “We need to be multi-platform marketers and work to make emotional connections with the potential audience in ways that are unique and surprising, while remaining organic to the shows we are marketing.” ABC has utilized many of the aforementioned techniques, as well as texting. Many people wouldn’t mind a friendly text reminding them to buy some movie tickets that have just gone on sale. Personally, I could use a text reminding me to set my DVR for *Gossip Girl* or *Lost*.

According to Laurel Bernard, senior vice president of Marketing at Fox in Los Angeles, the network openly participates in the community by having actors, writers and directors write on message boards and blogs. Fox has an official “Fox Insider Blog,” where stars communicate directly with fans. Fans dig that. Fans tell other fans. Bernard’s team has created stealth content online for the fans to unearth secret sites or other show tie-ins. For the show *Revelations*, John Miller, chief marketing officer for NBC Universal, sent out a totally unbranded viral campaign. Sites were put up in ancient Latin and potential viewers were left to figure it out. In order to reach a viewer like me zipping through the commercials, NBC puts its spots in the lower third of the screen to make them more visible in fast-forward.

There has never been a more challenging time to go into advertising. For creative types, out-of-the-box thinkers, artists, filmmakers, and pranksters, there is a place for us, or at least, there are jobs. This new age of advertising seems to take in the viewers’ intelligence, which we appreciate and will reward by tuning in. ●

Lisa Smith contributed to this article.

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## Novelas Conquer Hearts, Wallets of TV Subscribers

BY MARINA DEL RIVERO

For many years in Argentina, subscription or basic cable-satellite TV service, was considered “alternative television”: TV that viewers paid for if they wanted to see something different from broadcast television. More than 10 years ago, at the start of subscription television in Argentina, movie channels abounded on basic cable and satellite services. Today, these TV channels are entering a new phase, incorporating locally produced content with exclusive slots reserved for the transmission of telenovelas. Programmers of those channels are no longer thinking of themselves as purveyors of “alternative television.” They are more concerned with beating the ratings of the over-the-air channels.

Programmers brought telenovelas to basic subscription TV in an effort to attract females, who make up most of the audience of telenovelas on broadcast television.

Cosmopolitan TV, an Argentina-based pan-regional channel, in particular, was determined to challenge over-the-air television. In 2006, the channel, a joint venture between John Malone’s Liberty Global, and Hearst Entertainment, began airing the telenovela *Locas de Amor*. It was so well received that Cosmopolitan TV decided



Arterar’s Eduardo Fernandez



The stars of *Toilete*

to include more telenovelas in its schedule. In February 2007, Cosmopolitan placed Brazilian soap opera *El Clon* in the highly desirable 7 p.m. time slot, which according to ratings service Ibope-Telereport, attracted record audiences, particularly women. The series’ success placed Cosmopolitan TV among the top five most watched subscription channels in all of Latin America.

After the success of *El Clon*, the evening time slots became a new home for telenovelas on subscription TV. “*El Clon* did fantastically well,” explained Lucia Suarez, director of Content for Liberty Global-owned Pramer, which distributes Cosmopolitan TV in Latin America. “Their audience is now as faithful as that of any over-the-air channel. And since subscription TV services rerun their telenovelas, unlike network TV, they give viewers the opportunity to catch episodes that they missed.”

Subscription TV channels in Argentina are also buying content that was successful in other territories, especially in Brazil. At the beginning of this year, three programs from Brazil’s Globo TV occupied afternoon slots on Cosmopolitan TV, soap *Lazos de Familia*, and two miniseries: *La Presencia de Anita* and *Mujeres Apasionadas*. In May, Pramer decided to

develop a soap of its own for Cosmopolitan TV. With the help of Argentine production company Promofilm, Pramer set to work on *Toilete*, a telenovela produced entirely in Argentina that explores the world of women.

Similarly Canal Magazine, another pan-regional channel, and a subsidiary of Argentina’s Grupo Arterar, made over its primetime schedule with content traditionally reserved for daytime. In 2006, it imported popular novela *Mi Gorda Bella* from Colombia’s Caracol TV. As a result, Canal Magazine also landed on the list of the top five most watched subscription TV channels in all of Latin America. Presently, Canal’s line-up includes series from Brazil’s Globo and Mexico’s Televisa.

How are broadcasters reacting to these new challenges posed by subscription TV services? Eduardo Fernandez, artistic adviser of Arterar and Arts and Production manager of Channel 13 Argentina, explained that companies purchase content from international distributors according to the show’s performance in their own territories. “We take into account the quality of a production, its appeal to the female public and that it’s not currently airing on any cable or satellite outlets.” He also said that Brazilian soaps have larger audiences

Today, these TV channels are entering a new phase, incorporating locally produced content with exclusive slots reserved for the transmission of telenovelas...

Programmers no longer think of themselves as purveyors of ‘alternative television.’

than those from other countries. “However, in recent years, Mexican soaps have become equally as popular [in Argentina].”

Fox Life, a Fox Latin America channel, has also been catering to female audiences through telenovelas since 2006. Its slogan is: “The channel for women who did not expect a channel for women.” Aimed at women 18 to 49, the channel offers a daily mix of dramas, comedies, movies, and of course, soap operas. It was launched in all of Latin America after becoming the second most watched satellite TV channel in Italy. On the programming slate at its launch were series *Kitchen Confidential*, *Sex & the City*, *Jake in Progress*, *Beach Girls*, *How I Met Your Mother* and *The War at Home*. But the channel’s cornerstone was a strip of telenovelas, including *Los Treinta*, *Ladros de Corazones* and *Amor en Custodia*.

Since programmers also want to attract advertisers, it’s important that successful international and local productions add value and identity to a channel. “The important thing is to give the advertisers strong programming,” said Pramer’s Suarez, who would not disclose the cost of advertising per second on her channel. On Canal Magazine, on the other hand, advertisers (both national and international) during telenovelas are charged 18 Argentine pesos (or US\$6) per second. ●



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## Economy Cools Expo. Will Vegas Move Heat it Up?

**D**espite the sorry state of the economy, business was booming at the 28th annual Licensing International Expo, a three-day conference for merchandising rights holders that was held in early June at New York's hard-to-get-to Jacob Javits Convention Center. Regardless, Advanstar Global Licensing Group, which organizes the show on behalf of the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association (LIMA), is planning to move the Expo to the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas for its 2009 edition, citing the desire to "expand in new directions." *VideoAge* spoke with a slew of attendees to discern this year's sweeping licensing trends and to find out whether the organization will be able to weather the move to Sin City.

"The biggest trend I've noticed this year is that companies are trying to refresh classic characters," said Doug Schwalbe of New York-based Classic Media, an Entertainment Rights company. Classic Media came to the Expo this year to celebrate the 60th anniversary of *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, as well as the 15th birthday of *VeggieTales*. "It's a big issue for everyone involved in character licensing. We're doing that with *Casper*, of course. We have the new CG [computer-generated] *Casper's Scare School* and at the same time, we're re-launching classic *Casper* with a completely separate style guide. He's living on as a hip, Halloween-themed retro property."

While trends like this were easy to spot, less easy to finger was whether or not the falling dollar had a major effect on attendees. "It's got to be weighing on people's minds," said Schwalbe. "But prices for things that people want will still be driven by competition — not the dollar."

According to Steven Ekstract, group publisher for *License! Global Magazine*, the declining dollar only meant that more foreigners came to the show. "Europeans, especially, have a lot of spending power now," said Ekstract, mentioning that BBC Worldwide and Hit Entertainment were just a couple of the many Europe-based firms that exhibited at the Expo. "Europeans love coming to New York to shop, anyway," he said with a laugh. "This event [gave] them the perfect excuse to come here."



Angela Santomero and Samantha Freeman, co-creators and co-founders of *Super WHY!* and *Out of the Blue*

The downward spiraling economy and the costly Javits Convention Center may have kept some would-be exhibitors at bay, but the companies that did come were there to do business. Iceland's LazyTown Entertainment inked deals with licensing agents in Benelux, Israel and Eastern Europe for series *LazyTown Extra*. Brand Licensing Israel Ltd. will handle a merchandising program in Israel and Palestine. Jetix Licensing is charged with Eastern Europe and Licensee Connection will handle Benelux.

In a statement, LazyTown's Katie Foster, director of Brand and Licensing, Europe, said she was overjoyed with the appointments. "We have watched LazyTown grow rapidly... over the past six months since the inception of the European office, and these appointments are sure to help make LazyTown the biggest brand across Europe. Eastern Europe, Israel and Benelux are very important markets for us. We look forward to a strong and fruitful partnership with each of these three companies."

Burbank, California-headquartered DIC Entertainment, which recently merged with Canada's Cookie Jar, was appointed global licensing agent for the relaunch of classic girls brand, "Penny Brite," by Charisma Brands, LLC, an Irvine, California-based manufacturer of collectible dolls. The company intends to create two merchandising programs for the relaunch, including a classic retro line targeting young girls

and collectors, featuring apparel, music, gifts and more. Plans are also in motion for a home entertainment program that will be supported by a major licensing initiative across such categories as toys, health and beauty and back-to-school.

"*Penny Brite* has a chic, retro fashion feel that blends seamlessly with a wholesome lifestyle, appealing to girls of all ages and collectors," said Kirk Bloomgarden, evp, Worldwide Consumer Products and Marketing, Cookie Jar.

Bloomgarden also touched on the idea that one of this year's biggest Licensing Show trends was refreshing classic characters. "The new *Penny Brite* is strongly positioned once again to develop a new fan base among young girls around the world and to become the next hit evergreen brand."

Another company hoping it had hit upon the next big thing at the Expo was New York-based Out of the Blue Enterprises. At the Show, Out of the Blue co-founder Angela C. Santomero announced the first merchandising deals for the firm's flagship series, *Super WHY!*, which already airs in a raft of territories, including the U.S., U.K., South Africa, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, among other places.

The licensing program, like the show, will combine lovable characters with literacy education. Among the partners are Learning Curve Brands, Inc., which will introduce an extensive line of plush toys, figures, vehicles, playsets and electronic reading aids; Grosset & Dunlap, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group, which will feature the show's characters in a series of hardcover picture books, storybooks, readers and activity books; and PBS Home Video, which will release a series of *Super WHY!* DVDs to be distributed through Paramount Home Entertainment.

"Our goal was to provide parents with a television program they could feel good about and children with a show they think is fun — even while being educational," said Santomero. "All the new products have the same enriching learning-focused qualities that the series provides and will help broaden the learning and fun far beyond the TV."

Like Out of the Blue, BBC Worldwide came to Licensing Show to talk about merchandising plans for its newest hit property. *Charlie and Lola*, a cartoon



Andrew Forrest and Rachel Lane of FremantleMedia at their Licensing stand

with a unique "collage" animation look and a British sensibility, which has managed to find success in the U.S. Kids Preferred will introduce a range of plush dolls and doll cases and distribute a series-themed paperback book series. "We are excited to make available to *Charlie and Lola* fans all across the U.S. this new range of one-of-a-kind toys and books that will inspire them to use their imaginations to go on their own adventures — just like *Charlie and Lola*," said Anna Hewitt, head of International Licensing for BBC Worldwide.

While Mark Northwood, vice president, Licensing, the Americas for Toronto-based children's production company Nelvana Enterprises, wasn't touting any newly revitalized evergreen properties, he did find success promoting Nelvana's animated fare. "We've seen really good licensee response for our shows," he said, noting that *Ruby Gloom*, *Bakugan* and *Grossology* were among the most popular series at the Expo. The abundance of Europeans at the event meant that "for us, as far as the international side of things went, Nelvana was very successful at Licensing Show," he said.

And while some folks were wary of next year's big move to Las Vegas, Northwood wasn't fazed. "People are always apprehensive about any kind of change," he said. "But people will come together as an industry and make things work. And if not, they can always bring it back to New York."

David Luner, svp, Interactive and Consumer Products for FremantleMedia Enterprises in North America, echoed his statement. "We'll be there, but I'm skeptical," he said, noting that Licensing 2008 was especially successful for his firm this year due to a raft of recognizable brands, including *American Idol*, *Family Feud* and *The Price is Right*. "It's tough to change when it's not broken." Luner feels that moving the Expo 3,000 miles further away from FremantleMedia's European office cannot be a plus, but said he's willing to give it a chance.

More than 25,000 people from 82 countries were on hand to see and be seen at the Javits Center. It remains to be seen how many will make the trip out to Las Vegas next year. **LHR** ●



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## Broadcast TV to Broadband TV: The Trend Continues

BY LEVI SHAPIRO

**T**he conversion from TV broadcast to TV broadband is getting closer with the advent of WiMax — the next generation of mobile broadband — which is coming to the U.S. this fall. Increasingly, electromagnetic frequencies are being used not to transmit TV signals, but broadband services such as Wi-Fi and WiMax. By merging wireless cellular technology with a landline's high-speed broadband technology, the television industry is now able to offer TV service any time, anywhere, with any video device, whether it be a TV set, a computer or a phone.

WiMax is often called "Wi-Fi on steroids." While Wi-Fi is a short-range system that uses unlicensed spectrum, WiMax is long-range, covers many kilometers, and uses licensed spectrum from the FCC, the U.S. telecommunications authority. That can make your laptop, your phone or any other device with an Internet connection work in your car while traveling at 60 mp/h (96.56 km/h).

In spite of the deluge of press releases from wireless carriers over the last few years, the present third-generation (3G) network is still like "sipping through a straw," said Tim Sweeney, director of Mobile WiMax at Intel, referring to the fact that 3G systems are still too slow when it comes to transporting data. "Consumers should not have to distinguish between mobile Internet and [traditional] Internet." Intel, together with Motorola, literally drove that point home this year at the



Clearwire's Barry Davis

Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The press was regaled with YouTube clips in a car, delivered via WiMax, while driving at 45mp/h (72.42 km/h). "More powerful microprocessors and high-speed WiMax wireless networks will bring a new era of the full Internet on mobile devices," he said.

U.S. telephone giant Sprint Nextel plans to allocate 200 Megahertz of wireless spectrum toward a nationwide WiMax joint venture with Clearwire (a Washington state-based provider of high-speed wireless Internet) that values the entity at \$15 billion. Sprint has 51 percent ownership, Clearwire has 27 percent, and Intel, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, Bright House Networks and Google hold the rest. Brian Roberts, CEO of Comcast, cited his experience watching a broadband-delivered video clip at 50 mp/h (80.47 km/h) in Portland as a reason for choosing to invest.

The initial launch will be in Baltimore in September, followed by Chicago and Washington, D.C. According to Barry Davis, executive director of Product Planning at Clearwire, "Next year the service will cover a population of 60 million to 80 million people, then 120 million to 140 million in 2010." According to John Butler, CFO of Clearwire, the company estimates it will have 30.7 million subscribers by 2017, with coverage of 220 million people.

Of course, previous joint ventures among media titans have not exactly been successful. "The difference this time," promised Davis, "is that our partners own their own customers. Nobody cares more about a Comcast customer than Comcast." Similarly, Mike Roudi, head of Wireless at Time Warner Cable, told CNET, a technology network, "With Clearwire, we will control the customer relationship including the service and phones. We will handle pricing, marketing, customer care, and billing."

The only major rollout to date has been in Korea, where consumer adoption has been slower than expected. Back in 2006, Korea Telecom and SK Telecom launched their own version, called WiBro, using Intel's WiMax standard. Because of technical hurdles, rights issues, limited marketing, limited dual band devices and costly subscriptions, as of first quarter 2008, Korea Telecom achieved only 145,000 WiBro subscribers. Consumers

have shown far more interest in free services like multi-user gaming and high-speed Internet than a-la-carte video services. According to HJ Ahn, CEO of Synergy Holdings in Seoul and formerly head of IPTV for Korea Telecom, "It's not enough to just be a pipeline on top of the network. You need truly unique content that is reasonably priced. The regulatory environment does not permit extensive advertising."

Dave Poltrack, evp and chief Research officer of CBS Corporation, espoused an advertising-supported model for CBS's broadband video content, including WiMax. "Ad-supported works," he said. "CBS can reach a larger audience and get a better return by using advertising."

Clearwire and its wholesale partners have not yet publicly announced pricing for the WiMax service. However, video is potentially an important component of that offering. In addition to video, entertainment might also include localized, personalized, and location-based content. Other services will include residential voice and residential broadband, mobile voice and mobile broadband. However, entertainment is potentially the most lucrative of these services. U.S. households spend nearly five times the amount for entertainment than they do for broadband and telco. Moreover, the cable companies are deeply immersed in a no-holds barred war with the telcos to capture quad-play (video, broadband, mobile, voice) customers. In markets where telcos offer IPTV, there has been significantly greater consumer take-up than cable companies' VoIP voice offerings.

Communications services available on WiMax already available include Gmail, Google Calendar and Google Talk applications. As a "preferred vendor," YouTube may ultimately come preloaded on relevant devices. Google invested because it desperately needs a mobile Internet running on an open operating system and requiring lots of searches.

Google has championed an open-source, mobile operating system called Android. Telcos like Verizon and AT&T use their own proprietary operating systems and have been reluctant to adopt handsets that run on Android. WiMax would finally provide Android with a large addressable universe of mobile broadband users. Google engineer Dan Morill wrote on the Android Internals discussion board, "Android has two goals: first, to be an excellent mobile



Tim Sweeney, director of Mobile WiMax at Intel

platform on its merits, and second, to be open and open source." Google's \$500 million investment ensures the Android operating system software, which still lacks a U.S. wireless carrier partner, will be available to those 30 million WiMax subscribers.

What is less clear is how content owners will monetize in this new environment. Rick Robinson, vp, Business Development and Planning for Sprint's WiMax offering, XOHM, does not pretend to know which services will resonate with WiMax subscribers. "We can set the stage but the best thing is to make it easy for consumers and then follow," he said. "In an untethered environment, we may see a fundamental shift in the form of video content, for both creating and consuming content."

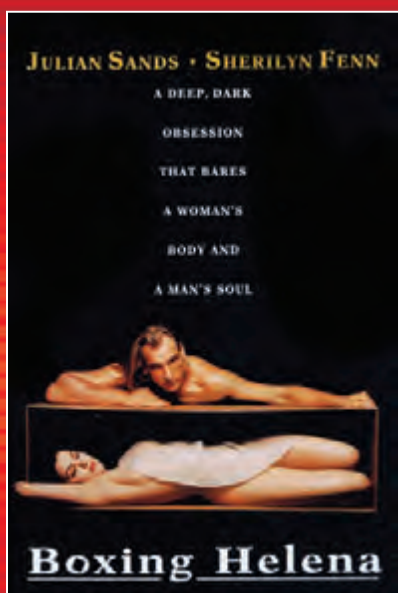
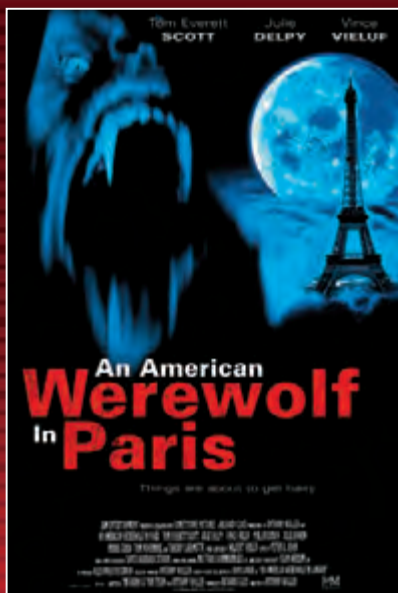
Video on non-traditional platforms without an ad-supported model has failed to reach mass audiences. For example, the U.S. Sirius Satellite Radio presently offers only three in-vehicle video channels but charges a subscription fee of \$20. Similarly, mobile television in the U.S. has reached a plateau of five percent penetration (according to Nielsen Mobile), in part because of the expensive subscription. Art Spivy, director of Content and Community at Sprint XOHM advocated "an environment like the Web, an ad-supported model to watch any show when you want. Advertising could be more relevant and valuable by knowing the viewer's current location, which is built into the XOHM network." Barry Davis at Clearwire has also encouraged studios, networks and content owners to consider revenue models based on advertising. One example is the television series *Smallville* from Warner Bros., which ran three-minute episodes on Sprint's mobile network that were ad-supported and generated high user engagement. Davis recommended that content owners "consider all the ways you can touch end users with this big pipe. The Web brought the advent of the short episode in an ad-based model. There will be new ways to build a business around WiMax."

Beginning with WiMax this year and followed with a competing technology called LTE, which Verizon will test-launch next year, content owners now have another broadband service to add to their distribution platforms. ●

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## YouTube: A Shaper Of Professional TV?

BY GLAUCO BENIGNI

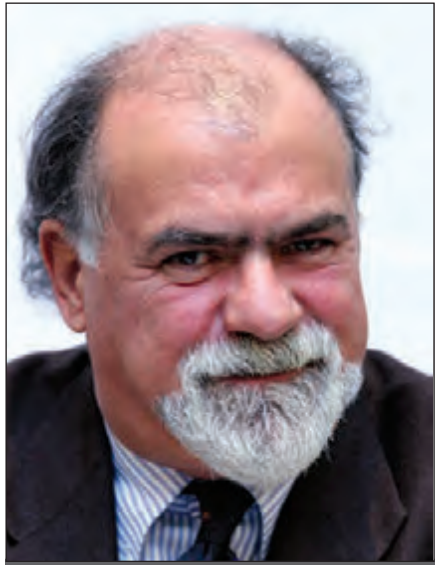
**A**ccording to newspaper reports, YouTube — the world's largest online video community with content made by professionals and amateurs alike from every corner of the planet — has reached up to 350 million members. The user-generated content site began three years ago as a social network that provided Web-surfers with a new service: the opportunity to upload, watch and share video clips on a seemingly boundless database. Then, on October 9, 2006, Google Inc. announced it would acquire YouTube for \$165 billion in a stock-for-stock transaction. The acquisition was the beginning of yet another era for YouTube. From that point on, the so-called "traditional media paradigm" changed from a threat to a reality and the future of video clip culture began. The "culture," or rather, "lifestyle," of the new "X," "Y" and "Z" generations could be easily shaped by 100,000 videos uploaded daily and watched anytime, anywhere. And those 100,000 videos, in a way, represent the "new world order" for viewers and television professionals alike.

That's why I chose to document the story of this phenomenon in a book called: *YouTube: La Storia (The History)*. The book, in Italian, is published by RaiEri, a division of state broadcaster RAI. YouTube is not just a technical tool. It is also the most mature example of globalization — a phenomenon with financial, social, aesthetic, cultural, political and religious repercussions worldwide.

Thanks to user-generated content, YouTube is modifying traditional mass-media outlets, and sometimes even replacing them. It is changing advertising practices and generating conflicts between old media and new, digital-era media. It is influencing electoral campaigns even in long-standing democracies, and putting authoritarian regimes into a tizzy. And it is discovering new talents in all areas of human endeavours and rendering — for better or for worse — repressed collective emotions visible.

YouTube is also reformatting today's debates on subjects of great importance, including war and the environment. YouTube has taken the first real global picture of people intent on filming themselves and on showing everything (whether it be profound or insipid) to everybody.

It is still unclear whether YouTube is making or will make a profit, or whether it will turn its part of the Web into a new Hollywood. Meanwhile, it is being used extensively, even by Senator Barack



Glaugo Benigni

Obama's camp and by the U.S. Defense Department, which allows the uploading of video clips from war zones. Additionally, the world's five biggest music labels have all made agreements with YouTube to use their music, and certain amateurish video clips have collected up to 80 million viewers. In the history of mass communications, no one has ever reported a medium's taking on such relevance in so short a time.

Now let's analyze who watches YouTube. A large number of people do, because its content is amplified by other media agents, especially the traditional press. YouTube's reach goes far beyond its Internet community and embraces millions of other people who are curious about the world of YouTube.

In the beginning, the site served almost solely for personal amusement. But quickly, other kinds of content started to be uploaded and watched, including promotional materials, reruns of TV shows, political messages and more.

The topic of amateur uploaders offers some interesting insight. Images are "unstable" due to the cheap video cameras and mobile phones with which the videos are recorded and the shoddy camera work that goes into filming them. But in a way it is also a code: a search for a video language that is "different." The process can be compared to avant-garde music or what in painting is referred to as abstract art.

Are we to really think that, after the YouTube experience, this generation of users will go back to consuming traditional media? Some might, but with a different outlook. And this different outlook is what will shape the future of media. ●



### Q&A WITH GLAUCO BENIGNI, AUTHOR OF YOUTUBE: LA STORIA

*VideoAge International: Tell me about YouTube: La Storia (The History).*

**GB:** The book is co-published by Magazzini Salani Editore (the publisher that holds the copyright for the *Harry Potter* books in Italy) and RaiEri, the publishing house of Italian state broadcaster RAI. The book is 256 pages long and is divided into three sections: "YouTube-The International History," "YouTube-Italy," and "How to Become Rich and Famous With YouTube." It retails for 16.80 euro (U.S.\$26.18).

*VAI: Will La Storia be translated into English?*

**GB:** The Grandi E Associati, a Milan-based literary agency, is currently marketing the international rights to a number of different interested publishers. Polish publisher Raphael, which is based in Krakow, has already acquired the rights for Poland. The same publisher also holds the Polish rights to my previous book, *The Pope's Guardian Angels*, a history of the pope's bodyguards, which has sold out in both Poland and Germany. Publishers in Japan and Israel have already shown much interest in *YouTube: The History*.

*VAI: Is the YouTube phenomenon as prevalent in Italy as it is in the U.S.?*

**GB:** Yes, in Italy, YouTube quickly became popular, just like in the U.S. Unfortunately, however, a large number of people began hearing about YouTube only in a negative way, because of reports from local newspapers and TV stations which showcased video clips depicting teenagers fighting or doing other outrageous things. The Italian press now reports almost daily on how YouTube is used and abused by Italians. On the positive side, a number of Italian politicians used YouTube during the last political campaign, and many artists regularly post their work on the site. Also, Italian broadcaster RAI struck a deal with the social network to show thousands of its video clips daily on a branded channel.

*VAI: What are some of YouTube's biggest challenges?*

**GB:** The YouTube community is floating pretty freely and anonymously on the Web. YouTube can go anywhere and everywhere looking for new opportunities for more visibility and eventually, some financial rewards. What happens will very much depend on the advertising investments made by the bigwigs on Madison Avenue.

*VAI: Who are YouTube's main competitors?*

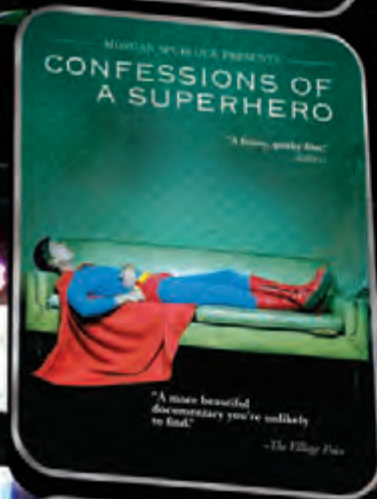
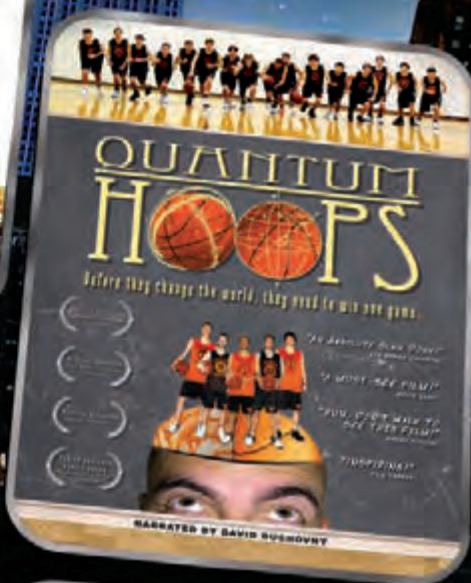
**GB:** Some experts say that the site's main competition comes from [social networking sites] MySpace, Facebook or Dailymotion, but I'd argue that those sites have a different basic concept and are not direct competitors of YouTube.

*VAI: How will YouTube affect traditional television?*

**GB:** Traditional TV will use YouTube as an enormous casting system in order to find new talent. Some "serial uploaders" are providing thousands of short stories that could eventually lead to new TV formats. Many TV broadcasters, including NBC and CBS, are using YouTube to promote their new programming. Other broadcasters are using the site as a way to improve their "interactivity" with audiences. Many YouTubers are using the site as an actual source of news. Further fragmentation of the traditional mass TV audience is the main effect that YouTube will have on television. But only when advertisers eventually begin investing portions of their budgets in YouTube will traditional TV really feel threatened. ●

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## IPTV Gets Four U.S. Players and Much Hope

BY MICHAEL HARABIN

**W**hen Echostar, operator of the U.S.-based satellite TV service Dish Network, announced last October that it would be launching ViP-TV, its own version of an IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) platform, the company was entering a nascent, yet already crowded IPTV market. ViP-TV will have to compete against incumbent IPTV platforms such as IP Prime from New Jersey-based satellite operator SES-Americom, Virginia's Avail Media, assorted smaller players and new services from large telephone companies like Verizon's FiOS and AT&T's U-verse.

A brief explanation of IPTV platforms helps to bring it all into focus. An IPTV platform essentially allows for the distribution of TV channels and video content (like VoD) for home TV viewing over a network designed for the Internet. Briefly stated, the plan envisions that telephone companies, Wi-Fi and WiMax operators or other public utilities like electrical cooperatives located throughout the U.S. will respond to cable TV companies' triple play suites (high-speed Internet access, cable TV, phone) by offering TV services to their customers.

The primary selling points of the IPTV platforms are the promise of distributing video signals in a more efficient manner in terms of bandwidth consumed. This makes an IPTV platform a lower-cost option for programmers and rights holders distributing both standard and high-definition channels and for service providers in terms of up-front head-end equipment costs (the head-end being the service providers' central equipment center where all of the equipment is housed). In effect, the service providers using IPTV platforms as their source for content can operate like a cable company and are called "cable bypass."

All of the IPTV platforms are pinning their hopes on the nascent IPTV technology to provide their potential customers (such as ethnic channels and VoD operators) with the ability to



Michael Harabin

compete against traditional delivery and distribution platforms like cable and TV satellite services. The primary focus of the IPTV equipment suppliers will be signing up smaller telephone companies (telcos). But it isn't just small telcos that are the appropriate and targeted customers for IPTV technology. Private cable operators, municipalities, master-planned communities, multiple-dwelling units (or MDUs), public utility districts, cooperatives and hotels are all potential clients due to the technical advantages of IPTV with its "pull" model (or one channel at a time), versus a push model (all channels sent at once), of cable and satellite, and triple play features.

The IPTV vanguard is also counting on independent IP platform operators to allow their customers to get to market faster because their IPTV platforms offer turnkey alternatives to acquire IP technology such as set-top boxes, content, customer care services and the marketing expertise they need to profitably compete.

In what shall be, and already is, a daunting challenge for the IPTV players, who among them has the upper hand? And what impact does it have on local TV stations and program rights holders?

Although last to enter the market, Echostar's ViP-TV may be able to

provide the best IPTV solution. While all of the IPTV companies listed above have specific attributes that distinguish them to their potential customers, Echostar has a few unique arrows in its quiver.

*Local Channels* – The ViP-TV platform does not offer local TV channel services, however local TV channels can be received in combination with Dish Network.

Indeed, one of the mainstays of the two Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) services in the U.S., Dish Network and market leader, DIRECTV, is their ability to offer local TV stations, both independent and network affiliates, to their customers via their satellite services. These local channels serve designated local market areas allowing both DIRECTV and Echostar's Dish Network to compete head on with cable in urbanized markets.

*Logistical Support* – The programmers of IPTV platforms may need assistance marketing video services to their subscribers and then serving those subscribers with the ability to handle both the outbound marketing and inbound customer service calls. ViP-TV, again through its relationship with Dish Network, can also offer a fleet of field service technicians countrywide for service calls and installations.

*Slingbox* – An interesting component to the ViP-TV solution is Slingbox, Echostar's latest strategic acquisition. Slingbox is an IPTV-based product that encodes viewers' own personal TV content and channels into IPTV for distribution on the Web, thus making it possible, through any Internet connection, to watch all TV offerings available at home, even when viewers are away from home. Slingbox technology, when married to a DVR (digital video recorder) set-top box has the potential to be a unique selling proposition for ViP-TV's potential customers.

A primary difference between, let's say, ViP-TV and Americom's IP Prime is that IP Prime uses C-band satellite frequencies, which require larger satellite antennas but offer better protection from service interruptions

*For programmers and rights holders licensing their content, the key question is whether the IPTV platforms that will enable small market telcos and others to enter the TV market will increase revenues.*

caused by rain. Echostar, which uses Ku-band frequencies, projects that up to 300 national channels will be available on ViP-TV in the near future. IP Prime claims over 300 local TV outlets to date. As for Avail Media, it claims to differentiate itself by combining TV networks and video-on-demand solutions into each single IPTV service.

For programmers and rights holders licensing their content, the key question is whether the IPTV platforms that will enable small market telcos and others to enter the TV market will increase revenues. It is also possible that IPTV platforms may simply cannibalize customers on existing platforms resulting in an overall zero sum game or no net increase of subscribers. On the other hand, if IPTV does grow the market overall, it will become yet another avenue to reach homes that were previously inaccessible to satellite.

Final thoughts: The projected cost of an IPTV head-end is lower than a traditional analog or digital cable TV head-end. However, because the customers of IPTV platforms (small rural telcos, hotels, platform operators) serve a relatively small number of customers, typically around 10,000 TV households, the cost of an IPTV-capable head-end can present customers with a significant upfront investment. This upfront cost for the service providers may pose a barrier for IPTV platforms' potential customers. Once the price of hardware is driven down or made more accessible through financial incentives, IPTV deployment will speed up. ●

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## P2P No Longer Means Piracy 2 Everyone

BY KATHLEEN TRACY

**S**ome electronic media industry experts predict the ultimate vehicle for all communications will be advanced peer-to-peer (P2P) technology. P2P is a simple and efficient way to share files directly between people on the same computer network, cutting out the need for a central server. Today, content providers, such as NBC television in the U.S., are using P2P as a distribution platform because it enables them to cut out the middleman, such as iTunes, and deal directly with viewers. And by sharing files already stored (cached), on consumers' cable boxes (which, in the case of P2P, act like computers), cable operators would be able to reduce the amount of costly bandwidth being used at any given moment.

However, while P2P technologies offer the opportunity for legitimate delivery systems, the television industry at large remains hindered by the perception that it is simply a piracy technology. But since P2P now offers producers the possibility of making a profit delivering content over the Internet, it is being given a fresh look, especially by those content owners who have made availability of online video to consumers a priority.

In the end, the market is going to decide what works and what doesn't. George Searle, CEO of file-sharing program LimeWire said, "It's tough to reconcile the various interests. Content owners are going to have to make some serious decisions. Suing consumers doesn't work. All of the lawsuits haven't done anything to curb P2P. It's just fragmented the user base. If you change the user experience," meaning, if you stop giving consumers the content they want or letting them use that content the way they want to, "they'll just go elsewhere," he said, noting that new file-sharing programs pop up all the time. "It also hasn't put a penny in the pockets of rights holders. The old [business model] isn't going to give way to a new one without a lot of learning and growing. It's got to be sensitive and responsive to the user base."

Gilles BianRosa, CEO of California's

Vuze, a software application that allows consumers to find, download, play and share media content of all types, concurred, saying content owners want control, the flexibility to experiment, and security. "But to curb piracy you have to out-perform piracy. Making content available is more powerful than trying to prevent consumers from getting what they want."

At a time when TV networks, studios and record labels are struggling to monetize the Internet, P2P should be a logical solution, said Michael King, CEO of Camas, Washington-based Abacast, a streaming media services provider. "It takes 27 minutes after an episode of *Lost* airs for it to become available online — because it takes that long to strip out the commercials. The network is going to have to launch it online at the same time as they broadcast it to monetize it." Even though prices for bandwidth are dropping, King said this only makes P2P more relevant because "the need for high-quality programming is ramping up much faster."

In the U.S., iTunes — Apple's digital media player application — is the current P2P leader, but others such as Hulu, a website that offers high-quality streams of TV shows and movies in the P2P format, are rapidly gaining in public awareness. Whether the content is made available on broadband (via mobile or landlines), the problem of how to deliver it securely, efficiently and to scale remains challenging for providers. But it is bandwidth worries that dominate conversations. That's why promoting P2P as a bandwidth-saving delivery system is key to its implementation, stressed Eric Klinker, Chief Technology Officer of San Francisco-based BitTorrent, a corporation that develops Internet content distribution technology.

"The time to make money in online video is [starting] now and only if we make that work will we see success in this industry," he said. "The perfect storm is upon us fueled by a tidal wave of consumer demand."

"On [traditional] TV it's easy to browse," explained Vuze's BianRosa. But to find older content on the

Internet (now referred to as longtail content), said BianRosa, "is more difficult and requires powerful tools." On the other side, content owners want security," he added. But to curb piracy you have to outperform piracy. Making content available on broadband is more powerful than trying to prevent consumers from getting what they want."

That is where the new P4P technology comes into play. P4P is a technology that groups and organizes the files shared in a P2P network so that those files can be found more quickly. It was developed as an initiative of the Maryland-based Distributed Computing Industry Association (DCIA), an organization with representation from the computing industry, and has over 60 companies in its core group that represent the entire P2P spectrum, including AT&T, Yale University and BitTorrent.

The implementation of P4P technology will reduce costs for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and offer more efficient and friendly services for consumers. Verizon's Doug Pasko, who co-chairs the P4P initiative, said that in field tests conducted by the DCIA, P4P cut the distance data traveled over networks by as much as half, "which has broad implications for the emerging P2P industry." In addition to saving cable operators' money by using less broadband, more efficient usage of that broadband space means cable carriers can offer added video services such as gaming and interactive shopping.

Pasko stressed that P4P is not an intrusive technology — no information about the consumer is being sent back to cable carriers and ISPs — nor is it a replacement or next generation of P2P. "It's intended to accelerate the implementation of P2P. It gives a dramatic increase in [service] performance [that benefits] the end-user."

Maximizing bandwidth remains a crucial concern for service providers as the online video platform emerges. "Everyone would agree that server networks have to be managed in terms of what they can and can't do," observed Tony Naughton, CEO of Seattle-based GridNetworks, a company that offers a

*However, while P2P technologies offer the opportunity for legitimate delivery systems, the television industry at large remains hindered by the perception that it is simply a piracy technology.*

service that can stream full screen HD-quality TV programs on the Internet for desktops or in living rooms.

Consumer privacy must be maintained and usage tracked so that content providers are paid. MSOs also have to come up with a policy regarding those handful of users that consume the majority of bandwidth — heavy video uploaders and downloaders can run a mindboggling 50 gigs of data, said Mark Mooradian, svp of Seattle-based digital media distribution firm MediaNet. He believes there should be asterisks in the contract, that if a subscriber is an excessive bandwidth user, their service is canceled. "[Some users] will fight that to the bitter end...There's been a proposal floating around lately (within the cable and DSL industries) that will target music, like a tax, that will tack on a few dollars to your [ISP] bill to pay for music."

There are still some naysayers who view digital delivery as a pipe dream. Perry Wu, CEO of Burlingame, California-based BitGravity, an Internet broadcasting company, concluded that while P2P technology is good for some applications, "The Internet will never have scale," meaning it will never be profitable. "The realm of P2P is to take licensed content and post it for free without permission. And the ISP controls the fate of your [online content delivery] business. I'm not willing to place my career on that kind of bet." ●

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EMOTIONS WITHOUT FRONTIERS

## America's TV Reaches Outside Its Borders, Fuels Growth

BY LUCY COHEN BLATTER

**A**s any traveler who's spent time flipping channels in a foreign hotel knows, U.S. TV brands are everywhere and come in many different languages. Thanks to a plethora of well-known series, movies, and brands originating from the U.S., there seems to be an almost insatiable desire for American TV brands throughout the world. And judging from the industry's growth and the investments some companies are making, TV globalization is here to stay.

Last year, NBC Universal chief executive Jeff Zucker publicly stressed a desire to expand NBC's international channels business. Zucker was quoted in the *International Herald Tribune* saying he wanted to nearly double his company's foreign revenue by 2010, lifting it to \$5 billion, or 30 percent of



Reed Manville, president of Manville Media Consulting

the media company's total revenue, from 18 percent in 2006.

The company worked toward that goal by acquiring U.K.-based Sparrowhawk Media (for a reported \$350 million), which reaches 60 million subscribers in 152 countries.

Experts say NBC made these moves to catch up with the other studios, where foreign revenue hovers somewhere around 18-23 percent of their overall intake. Those profits comes

from a two-tier model: subscription and advertising.

One studio that is now poised to enter the international channel marketplace in a big way is CBS Paramount International Television. The company lost the bulk of its channel assets during the CBS Corp. and Viacom Inc. split. Now, CBS executives are exploring which brands to utilize, and which genres to focus on when its channels go global. With over 70,000 hours of programming in its catalogue, the possibilities seem endless.

"We're in the advanced planning stages with potential partners on virtually every continent," said Reed Manville, president of Manville Media Consulting, who's been brought on to lead the CBS-Paramount expansion project. "With so many hours of programming, and so many catalogues to choose from — we have rights to the Showtime, King World and Paramount programs — we can be broad or very narrow when it comes to genres."

One company that's already proved itself a major player in the international channels business is Sony, which reaches international destinations with its Sony Entertainment Television (SET), AXN, and Animax channels, among others. According to its president of International Networks, Andy Kaplan, for "Sony Pictures Entertainment, [the international channel business] is becoming more and more important," he said.

Bruce Tuchman, evp of MGM Networks, would not disclose an actual dollar sum, but ensured that, "our foreign channels do represent a significant and high-growth revenue stream for MGM."

The company's foreign assets include MGM-branded channels, first-run pay-TV premium joint venture channels with other studios, and other equity interests in non-MGM branded cable-satellite entertainment channels such as Casaclub TV in Latin America and Portugal. MGM-branded channels, which Tuchman described as the core of his company's international channel business, feature current and library films. The channels reach tens of millions of subscribers, are available in over 120 countries, have about 20 separate feeds, and are in well over a dozen languages.

Though the company recently signed a mobile carriage deal with Vodafone in Germany, new technologies like mobile and IPTV still serve to complement, rather than replace, the traditional modes of distribution — cable and satellite. "People have been wondering whether cable and satellite distribution will be replaced for 10 years now," he said. "But the numbers haven't eroded at all. They've grown. The new technologies offer additional forms of distribution, but they don't replace anything."

This sentiment was echoed by Jon Helmrich, president of Los Angeles-based IBC, who has been involved in somewhere between 20 and 30 channel launches during a career that included stints at E! and Canada's CHUM. "If the goal of selling a channel internationally is to build brand recognition and bring in revenue, there is still no better way to do that than by launching a channel on cable or satellite. If you're a U.S. channel and you want a U.K. presence, for example, you still need a platform like BSkyB or Virgin Media. Those are still the grand prizes."

According to Malcolm Dudley-Smith, evp of Branded Services-Business Management, at Warner Bros. International Television Distribution, there's no real overhaul in sight. "The linear channel business continues to deliver massive audiences and advertising dollars in the world's major markets, and will therefore retain relevance for some time."

Of course, that doesn't mean Warner Bros. and the other studios won't take advantage of the new platforms available to their channels. In the last two years, Warner Bros. has launched several audio and visual on-demand and subscription video-on-demand Warner TV channels in Asia and Europe. The channels follow the long-term success of Warner Channel, a linear programming service that reaches 20 countries in Latin America. "We are now not just focused on licensing programming, but also on creating and providing interesting linear and non-linear channels over as many established and new platforms as possible. We are moving from being just a licensor to also becoming a creator of entertainment destinations that highlight our programming," Dudley-Smith said.



Bruce Tuchman, evp of MGM Networks

As a latecomer, CBS Paramount International Television has the advantage of entering a market where new platforms have already been tested and improved. "We have a multi-pronged focus," Manville said. We will be adaptable to all new mediums, including mobile and IPTV. We need to be flexible about meeting the customers where they want to meet us," he said. "In countries where the linear market is already saturated, we'll focus on the non-linear areas, with VoD or SVoD programming."

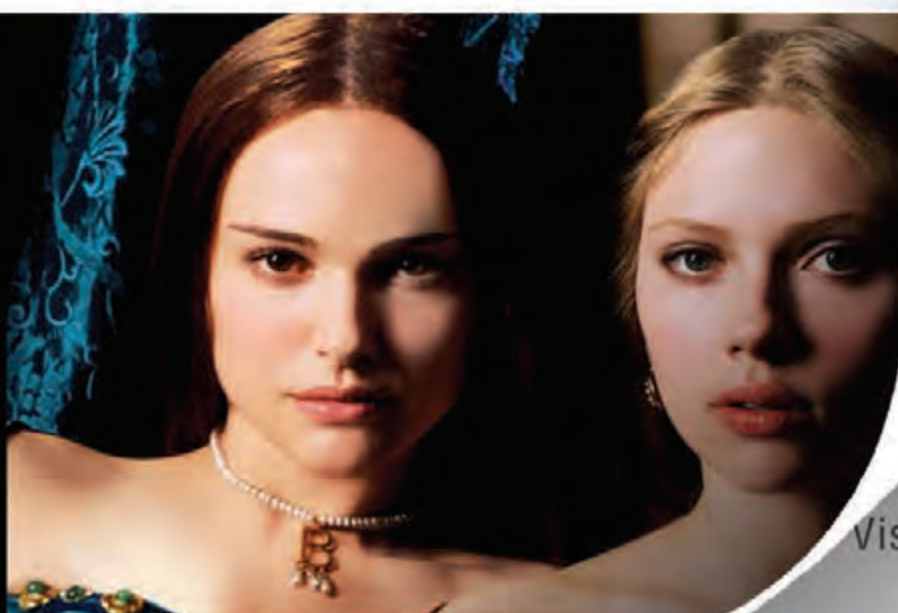
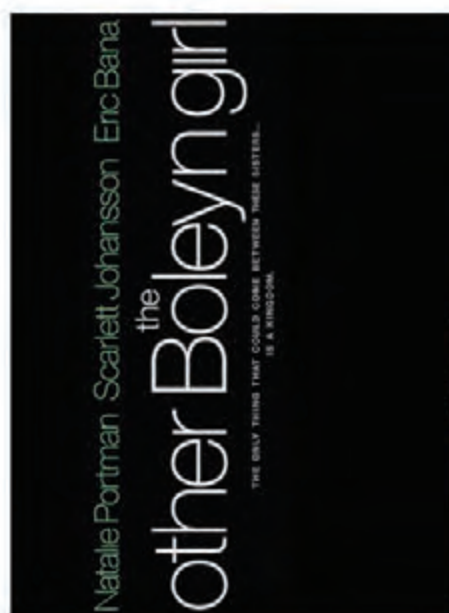
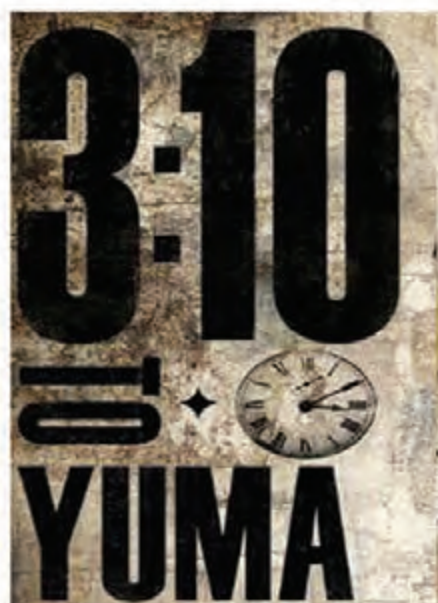
According to IBC's Helmrich, success is less about which distribution medium you use and more about how you brand yourself. "Success comes when a brand really means something. You need to stick to who you say you are." When asked which companies have been most successful at branding themselves, Helmrich pointed to Discovery, National Geographic and MTV.

Thanks to its countdown shows, reality programs, and entertainment news, E! has become a beacon of branding. The E! channels first launched on Sky in the U.K. in 2002, and, according to Brad Wald, managing director, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, for Comcast International Media Group, they are now present in more than 100 countries within the EMEA territory. Comcast's various Style Network channels launched in the territory in November 2007, and



Jon Helmrich, president of IBC

(Continued on Page 42)



  
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# U.S. International Channels

(Continued from Page 40)

there are plans to launch the Golf Channel in 2009. According to Wald, revenue — and viewers — are on an upswing. “The pie is certainly getting bigger all over the world,” he said.

The transition from analog to digital television is fueling growth particularly in territories such as Eastern Europe and parts of Asia, which were slow to adopt American channels. According to Helmrich, some of the smaller territories, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, are now most promising, thanks

to a smoother transition to digital television.

Warner Bros. is making a large investment in the Indian market in particular. The company plans to launch a Warner Bros.-branded channel in collaboration with sister company Turner Entertainment Networks Asia later this year, pending regulatory approval. “We have had our eye on India for some time and are most excited about working with our colleagues at Turner in delivering a new service to this

market,” Dudley-Smith said.

While newly digital TV territories provide U.S. companies with the potential to make more money and reach more viewers, they all require special attention. “Every territory and every channel is completely unique,” MGM’s Tuchman said. “There’s no cookie-cutter way to do it, so you need support all over the world.”

Sony’s Kaplan agreed, saying, “You need to find the right niche and need for each operator.” He also emphasized the



Andy Kaplan, president of International Networks for SPTI

importance of localization. “American programming works all over the world,” he said. “But the key to taking these channels to the next level is localization: original local production, dubbing and subtitling.”

But the demand for localization varies greatly by territory. “Some countries, like South Africa, are happy with U.S. shows exactly how they are in America, but other countries, like France, for example, require their own original shows,” Comcast’s Wald said. In countries that require highly localized programs, E! will produce local versions of countdowns, red carpet interviews and the *E! News* series.

“No two channels are ever the same,” said Helmrich, who, as president of IBC, now consults for companies looking to launch channels internationally. “You have to be flexible. I’ve seen my clients spend a lot of money going just one way. And then they have to spend a lot more money balancing out how much local and U.S. programming is needed.”

As with any new technology, the addition of new distribution platforms has been both a blessing and a curse. “New technologies have aided transmission and brought down costs. For example, you don’t need to dub and ship videos any more; transponder costs have gotten lower too. Those things have propelled the industry and made channel launches quicker and easier,” Helmrich said.

“But, on the business side, it’s all more complicated. With the Internet-based technologies there are more opportunities, but deal-making is also a lot more complicated than it was with just cable and satellite.”

No matter what, the business seems poised for more growth. “It maximizes return on content. Channels are about growing real long-term revenue assets, much more than program sales ever can,” Helmrich said. ●

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## Despite All, Still the Best Place for Global Business

It falls in the fall, right at the end of most buyers' fiscal year, yet MIPCOM is still the industry's most important market. So important that, like a hurricane, it is knocking out all the other markets in its path, like MIFED yesterday and the AFM today.

An added problem should be that MIPCOM takes place in the euro zone, which is a concern for countries, such as the U.S., which currently have weak currencies. Then there's the fact that it is held in Cannes, France, one of the euro zone's most expensive areas. That should really be its kiss of death. But MIPCOM not only generates additional revenues for sellers, it actually saves distributors money because it boasts growing participation, thereby reducing traveling time and expenses to visit clients individually (see related story on the inconveniences of travel on pg. 20).

MIPCOM is now even valuable to Latin American companies, who consider it their third largest market after NATPE and the L.A. Screenings. This year, MIPCOM is particularly important to U.S. studios as a place to highlight pilots that weren't shown at the L.A. Screenings (see related front cover story and pg. 54).

In the months leading up to the five-day MIPCOM trade show, which will be starting rather late, on October 13, TV companies the world over have been



Chloe Van den Berg of Entertainment Rights



Power's Chris Philip and Eloise Tooke

readying their slates for an entertainment extravaganza that will cap off a somewhat irregular year in the industry. *VideoAge* spoke with a slew of firms to find out what new product they'll be bringing to the Palais, if the U.S. writers' strike has affected them, and if MIPCOM is still the best place for TV executives to do global business.

"MIPCOM marks the beginning of the year-end frenzy for us," said Oliver Kreuter, head of Distribution for Germany's Bavaria Media, "Buyers come out of their summer break ready to make the last acquisitions for the current year." This year, Bavaria will be launching *Serralonga*, a two-part adventure miniseries from Spain, as well as disaster movie *White Menace-The Avalanche of the Century*. "MIPCOM is a catalyst for the business we want to do during the second half of the year," he said, before adding that Bavaria and TV3 de Catalunya will host a special event and cocktail on October 13 to celebrate the international launch of *Serralonga*.

Following Canada-based Cookie Jar Entertainment's recent merger with U.S.-based DIC, MIPCOM will be the newly formed company's coming out party. "This is the first show since combining our efforts," said Cookie Jar's Toper Taylor, noting that the firm now has over 6,000 hours of programming in its library — one of the largest in kids' television. This year, Cookie Jar is bringing a number of new

kiddie series, including *Metajets*, a co-production with Korea's Sunwoo, and *Noonbory and the Super 7*, a co-pro with Korean partner Daewon Media. According to Taylor, the aftereffects of the U.S. writers' strike will still be felt. "It's still hurting the U.S., but it creates opportunities for international co-productions."

Tobias de Graaff, svp, Sales, Europe, at the U.K.'s ITV Worldwide, the international distribution arm of ITV that combines the recently merged Granada International and Granada Ventures, concurred with Taylor that the strike is still on people's minds. "Our buyers didn't get the normal amount of scripted shows that they usually get," he said. "Because of that shortfall, they're looking for our stuff." The company is bringing product galore in the hopes of filling that void. *Scorched* is a futuristic disaster movie about the effects of global warming that de Graaff hopes will strike a chord in this era of environmental awareness. But de Graaff is most excited about *Britannia High*, a musical drama series that is expected to soar. Besides the series, attendees will see a new booth for ITV, which better reflects its recent Granada acquisitions. "Expect prettiness," de Graaff said cheekily.

While his company's stand won't be new, it will still be rather spacious, said TV France International's (TVFI) Mathieu Bejot, who confirmed that approximately 50 French firms will operate under the TVFI umbrella. "MIPCOM will be especially interesting to us this year because there's going to be a lot of animation," he said, noting that kids' programming makes up roughly 35-40 percent of French television exports each year.

In addition to ITV, another U.K. company that will be on hand to meet, greet and do business at MIPCOM is Power, which will focus its market efforts on promoting *Crusoe*, its adaptation of the famed Daniel Defoe novel that airs this fall on NBC in the U.S. "We've pre-sold *Crusoe* in 43 territories," said Power's Chris Philip, mentioning that the family-friendly series will soon air on Canal Plus in France, Channel Nine in Australia and TV2 in Hungary, among other regions.



Xavier Aristimuño of Telemundo

"It's an enormous accomplishment to get a scripted show on TV in the U.S.," said Philip. "When we're sitting at a table with a client and we tell them we have a U.S. network show, that gets their attention immediately. We've been able to capitalize on that with a number of long-term output deals."

U.K.-based FremantleMedia Enterprises (FME) has also found luck with U.S. networks in recent months. *America's Toughest Jobs*, a series about the hardest professions out there, recently began airing NBC. "There is definitely still fallout from the writers' strike," said Mark Gray, head of Acquisitions at FME. "As a result, the U.S. networks have been showing a lot of unscripted programs," which is part of the reason why *America's Toughest Jobs* came to the peacock net.

"The strike has both helped us and hurt us," said Michel Rodrigue, CEO and founder of Canada's Distraction, which is bringing some of its most popular formats to Cannes, including *Next Great Leader* and *Serial Frank*. "It's helped because we had the opportunity to pitch our shows to the networks. It got us places we wouldn't have been before. But a strike is never a good thing for our industry, so we were happy when it ended." Heading into MIPCOM, Rodrigue is excited that formats are more popular than ever and isn't at all worried that the studios are now fully invested in the format game. "We're the oldest company dealing with formats," he said. "We choose carefully. We know what we're doing."

On the Spanish-language side, U.S.-based Telemundo is muy excited about the telenovelas it will be bringing to the market. Among the Spanish-language soaps to be showcased at MIPCOM will be *Doña Bárbara*, *Without Breasts There is No Paradise* and *Marina*. "MIPCOM has always been the most relevant market for us because while other markets are local, MIPCOM continues to be global," said Telemundo's Xavier Aristimuño. The company, which has a strong presence in Asia, will use the event to continue its focus on the region. "China is a huge market for us," said Aristimuño, noting that *Marina*

(Continued on Page 46)

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# MIPCOM Preview

(Continued from Page 44)

will soon be on the air there. The company also has soaps airing in the Philippines, Japan, and Korea, among other locales. Aristimuño believes that Telemundo's novelas do so well in Asia because "they're simple love stories and they have a beginning and an end. People can relate to them."

Asia is also an important market for U.K.-based Fireworks International. "While every territory is pivotal to our company's success, we have noticed significant growth trends in the Asian, Eastern, and Central European and

Latin American markets," said Fireworks' Saralo MacGregor. "We see these territories as areas of great potential." MacGregor, who'll be at MIPCOM with a number of new programs, including live-action tween series *Half Moon Investigations* and *Family Biz*, also spoke to the recent strike in the U.S. "Buyers are still waiting to see what the networks will be airing this fall in order to make strategic buying decisions," she said. "Fireworks has been less affected than some given the fact that we have continued to acquire new programming despite the

strike. Our catalogue has now grown in size to over 3,000 hours of quality programming following our recent acquisition of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation program library, as well as Allumination FilmWorks' library."

Eileen Pesah, head of Sales at the U.K.'s Pilot Productions, said that she too will be focusing on Asia. "All territories are equally important to us," she said. "But obviously, with China opening up, I am particularly keen to place our catalogue with Chinese



Fireworks' Saralo MacGregor

broadcasters." However, she added, "my main focus is placing at least one of our series with each and every terrestrial channel across the world."

In addition to China, Chloe Van den Berg, director of Sales for London's Entertainment Rights (ER), is focusing on Brazil, India and Russia. "We're seeing such growth in those areas," she said, noting that ER is coming to the Palais with a slew of kiddie shows, including *Kung Fu Magoo* and the preschool-aimed *Guess With Jess*. "Of course, we're also focused on the majors, but it's taken a lot of time and patience to build these newer markets."

As usual, this year's conference will feature a heaping helping of speeches and panels. Highlights include a keynote from Michael Eisner, former CEO of the Walt Disney Company, and the current driving force behind online content companies Vuguru and Veoh, who will speak about his utopian vision of an entertainment industry that will bring the consumer, the producer and the distributor closer together; a speech by Philippe Dauman, president and CEO of Viacom, who will discuss the creative resurgence at Viacom's cable properties in terms of traditional programming and multi-platform integration; a keynote from Chad Hurley, co-founder and CEO of file-sharing website YouTube (see related story on pg. 32); and a discussion with David Zaslav, president and CEO of Discovery Communications, who will talk about Planet Green, Discovery's global initiative to preserve and celebrate the planet.

MIPCOM 2007 drew a total of 13,371 participants, a seven percent increase over the previous year's market. Some 4,585 companies from 105 countries were on hand. Reed Midem, organizer of the event, hopes for even higher numbers for MIPCOM 2008, even though one can only imagine where these new souls are going to be accommodated. **LHR** ●

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## Whose Rights Are They Anyway?

**A**s the business of financing content becomes ever more expensive and complicated, it becomes necessary to involve ever more partners. But the more partners a producer involves, the more rights they each have to give away. Holding on to enough to make the whole exercise financially meaningful can be a tricky business. *VideoAge* investigates.

For Justin Bodle, chairman and CEO of U.K.-based Power Corp, producers of *Flood, Ice*, and the new NBC Sam Neill vehicle, *Crusoe*, the question of rights retention is a story with a very simple plot line. "The bigger the percentage of the budget not paid for by the broadcaster," asserted Bodle, "the more rights they have to give up to cover the shortfall." That seems to be a no-brainer, and is an assertion supported by Australia-based Southern Star International's chief executive Catherine Payne, who noted, "The key factor is the producer's ability to complete the financing of the production through a combination of other broadcaster pre-sales, investment against distribution rights and accessing subsidies and other forms of investment."

The mood of unanimity appears to be continued by Michele Buck, joint managing director of Mammoth Productions, a new British indie, 25 percent owned by ITV and responsible for the recent BBC primetime drama, *Bonekickers*, and ITV'S *Lost in Austen*.



FremantleMedia's Mark Gray



Power's *Crusoe* will soon air on NBC in the U.S.

"Obviously," observed Buck, "if you are looking at co-productions then, by definition, you cannot keep all rights outside your territory, as you have to give something to other partners in return for their investment." But the unanimity starts to thin, as Buck continued, "however, if you are making a parochial drama it is still reasonably common for the commissioning broadcaster to fund the show 100 percent, and then, of course, you are able to keep everything."

Power's Bodle, by contrast, believes that, "in the case of drama, it is now very hard to make a decent hour of primetime drama on the budgets any one country can afford to offer," he said. "Over and above that, if you want to make something appealing to the international market, then you will certainly need several broadcasters contributing to the pot."

They also appear to diverge over the relative ease of holding rights for projects with high-end budgets. For Buck, "once you get into high-end budgets then holding on to rights does become a lot more difficult, as this will mean that you are almost certainly talking co-production, and, as I intimated earlier, once you start to do that you have to give away rights in return for the investment other parties are bringing to the table." Bodle, by contrast, believes, "in many ways it is much easier to hold on to international when funding high-end precisely

because no European broadcaster can afford these budgets and even the very biggest players will say, "here's half the budget – good luck in finding the other half!" This apparent disagreement is probably as much a question of semantics as it is finance since, if the hypothetical high-end budget is to be found, the international rights the producer has retained will, at least in part, have to be given to another broadcaster in another country to raise the deficit.

Mark Gray, vice president, Acquisitions, for the U.K.'s FremantleMedia Enterprises, summed up these apparently contradictory views this way. "The major factor," he insisted, "is the local terms of trade between producer and broadcaster. The other significant factor is budget. If it is very high the broadcaster may be forced to allow the producer to fill the deficit before selling rights elsewhere."

Gray's underlining of the importance of local terms of trade is echoed by Southern Star's Payne. "Some markets," she observed, "are more regulated than others. For example, the terms of trade in the U.K. do give the producer a right to retain distribution, but other markets, such as Australia, are more complicated, where the size of the market often requires a broadcaster to contribute an investment in addition to a license fee." Although Payne acknowledged that, "they will not necessarily want to control distribution,



Justin Bodle of U.K.-based Power

they will want some influence over it, and also a profit share." While insisting that, "as we focus on the international market, we do not produce a lot of programming that we do not wish to distribute," Payne does acknowledge that there are sometimes exceptions, "such as a high-end social documentary that is better sold in a dedicated strand that is already sold in another catalogue."

Fremantle's Gray believes the U.K. model to which Payne referred is envied around the world, claiming, "I know that producers in several countries are looking to achieve terms of trade similar to those in the U.K." However, this is not how Power's Bodle sees it. "Several years ago," he recalled, "there was a lot of toing and froing with PACT (the U.K.'s trade body for independent producers) over who was allowed to keep what rights and when. But," continued Bodle, "Those discussions have become largely irrelevant in today's market. For one thing," he went on to explain, "Most producers have realized that they are not distributors and that it makes much more sense for them to get their rights out there with a specialist distributor who knows the market for their product and will do a good job of getting them the best price for it."

Bodle also pointed out that, "the question of retaining rights is very different in the U.S. and Canada from Europe. In the U.S. and Canada," he explained, "there are vast secondary broadcast and DVD markets that can cap off the deficit in a way that is not possible in Europe." Although he does accept that, "accessing these markets does mean pushing your content through a studio, and this can make it very difficult to retain rights."

For all of the contradictions and apparent complications, maybe the answer to the question 'whose rights are they anyway?' can be found in a paraphrase of former U.S. president Bill Clinton's famous observation, "It's the money stupid!" **BJ** ●

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## Beijing Reignited Sports On TV. Biz Will Benefit

In the wake of the recent, and by all accounts successful, summer Olympic games in Beijing (despite early talks of various boycotts), gyms and sport centers worldwide have reported record attendance. TV viewers were apparently inspired by athletes such as American Michael Phelps — who proved himself to be one of the greatest swimmers of all time — to get into shape.

Now, organizers of the 19th edition of SPORTELMonaco, which itself is taking shape as we speak, are hoping for a larger influx of TV sports executives — execs who were similarly stimulated by the events in Beijing — to their programming market, which will be held at Monaco's Grimaldi Forum, October 20-23, just three days after MIPCOM in nearby Cannes.

Now that it's all over in Beijing, the game moves to another exhibition floor, that of SPORTELM, where 500 companies will take advantage of the trailing effects of the XXIX Olympiad to find more TV time for countless varieties of sports, even more than the 28 sports that made up the 302 events of the Olympiad.

As proof of the fact that all things sports are firmly entrenched on the entertainment industry's radar, in the weeks leading up to the market one thing quickly became clear — it was going to be a packed house. As *VideoAge* went to press, 98 percent of the exhibition space had already been sold out, leading the powers that be at SPORTELM to predict that 2008 would be its biggest year ever.

"Based on contracts already received and verbal commitments from new and returning exhibitors, we surely will have our second consecutive sell-out at SPORTELMonaco and perhaps our third consecutive largest-ever market in terms of overall attendance," said David Tomatis, CEO of SPORTELM. "Virtually all of our core group of major exhibitors will be returning, along with a number of first-time exhibitors. We are seeing a good mix of companies involved in traditional sports television, along with those involved with the Internet and mobile technologies. SPORTELM is certainly reflective of a rapidly



At last year's SPORTELMonaco

developing marketplace."

Bill Vitale, chairman of New Jersey-based Vital Communications, the exclusive worldwide Sales and Marketing representative for SPORTELM, added: "We've got a bunch of new companies this year, which means new opportunities for attendees."

Due to the overwhelming response, market organizers have had to once again put stands in the lobby area, something they did for the first time just last year. "As an organizer, it's gratifying to know that we're selling out two years in a row." In fact, sports programming has become so popular that the company runs two other sports-related events, SPORTELAsia and SPORTELAmerica.

As for all the sports markets within the SPORTELM family, Monaco will see an estimated 500 buyers of sporting programs from all over the world. Traditionally, television devotes a good part of its schedule to sports, especially football (soccer), tennis, racecar driving, cycling, rugby, American football, golf, baseball, basketball, hockey, boxing and wrestling. Audiences for sports programming are largely made up of males. But the Olympics bring in record numbers of a demographic that's been known to largely shun sporting events: young women. According to an online

study conducted by Lieberman Research Worldwide, a global market research company with offices in L.A., London, Shanghai and Tokyo, 51 percent of women are interested in the Olympic brand. A 2007 ESPN Sports poll found that 71.1 percent of females are interested in the summer Olympics, while 72.7 percent are interested in the winter games, which translates into big money for television. In fact, the International Olympic Committee, a Switzerland-based non-profit, non-governmental association that supervises the organization of the Olympics, reported \$1.6 billion in TV revenue from the Beijing games alone.

One individual who was at SPORTELM to witness last year's sell-out and will be on hand once again at SPORTELMonaco 2008 is Matthew Ody of eponymous firm, Tennessee-based Matthew Ody & Associates. "SPORTELMonaco is a niche market meant specifically for sports," said Ody. "So you really get some quality time out of it instead of wasting your time meeting up with people who aren't necessarily into sports."

Ody, who also plans on attending MIPCOM the week before SPORTELM in order to have all his bases covered, is confident that his time in Monaco will be well spent. "Asia and Africa are big into fight shows," he said. "And there

are some new channels in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and India [where my programming would be a perfect fit]. There are more and more general entertainment channels that are buying sports shows each day. SPORTELM is the place to connect with them."

Fred Haber of New Jersey's Alfred Haber Distribution will also be manning his firm's stand in the Grimaldi Forum. "It's important for us to be there because we're expeditiously becoming a player in the international TV sports marketplace," he said. "Our core business is series and specials, but we're focusing a lot on sports now too."

Alfred Haber Distribution will bring a number of sports specials to the market, including *World Poker Tour*, which, in recent years, has begun to be thought of as an actual athletic event — despite the fact that poker players rarely leave their seats. "Ten years ago we couldn't have called this a sport," said Haber with a laugh. "But now, we have interest from all over the world, including Scandinavia, Russia, France and the U.K."

Like Ody, Haber also plans to go to MIPCOM and then on to Monaco. And he, for one, likes it that way. "It's really convenient, almost seamless," he said. "Your head's still set on selling. But you get that weekend in between to finish up with one market and start preparing for the next."

In addition to the business of buying and selling, SPORTELMonaco 2008 will feature a slew of sessions designed to get people talking. Panels include: "The Digital Revolution," which will take a look at the proliferation of formats and rights segmentation; "Olympic Games and Television: From Beijing to London," which will examine the recently concluded summer games; and a special press event entitled "The New International Rugby."

"I'm most looking forward to the post-Olympics sessions," said Vitale. "Beijing was terribly interesting on a number of levels."

But Vitale is also keyed up about a new aspect of the market, the first-ever "SPORTELM Football Workshop," which will be held on October 22. Switzerland's SINERGI Sports Consulting has partnered with SPORTELM for the launch of this one-day seminar. Topics to be discussed include: generating, managing and monetizing online and mobile media content; optimizing business models and strategies for new media; and increasing revenues through new media, with a focus on the sale of mobile and Web-TV content.

Last year's SPORTELMonaco drew 2,362 participants representing 977 companies from 79 countries. And numbers are expected to be up this year.

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## Latin Film Execs Sought After By Trade Shows

**T**he month of October is becoming a bazaar of markets. It could even be called a market extravaganza, if one considers MIPCOM Jr. and MIPCOM (October 11-17) as the opening salvo in France, followed by the Antalya Film Fest in Turkey (October 10-19), immediately followed by the Rome Cinema Fest in Italy (October 22-31) and the Florida Media Market in the U.S. (October 23-26).

In addition to the warm weather, what these three markets have in common is the desire to attract Latin American film executives, which makes for a busy time before the Latins can land in their favorite spot, Santa Monica, in time for the American Film Market (November 5-12). But that's in November, a topic for another "busy month" article later on.

Like other markets of its kind, the Florida Media Market (FMM) is targeted at the Latin film and TV community in the U.S. (Hispanic), a hot commodity that, so far, only another market such as NATPE, which is held in January in Las Vegas, has attracted.

Beginning on October 23, the third annual FMM kicks off at Miami Beach's Alexander Hotel. Executives will converge at the beachfront resort for a three-day international media market and conference made up of panels, networking opportunities and a host of screenings.

Last year's market, though small in comparison to others, was hailed as a success. Maritza Guimet, organizer of FMM, was confident that this year's edition will be even better. "We have all the sponsors from last year and more," she said, "and registration and hotel occupancy are up." Indeed, at press time, around 1,000 participants were registered for the event, which is double last year's 500 attendees. Guimet said she expects the final total to be even higher.

Guimet attributed the FMM's increasing popularity, beyond just the numbers, to a variety of factors. For starters, she noted that the market

appeals to a wide selection of buyers and sellers because it incorporates many different kinds of media. "It's actually a gateway to all media," she said, "because of the focus on different outlets for distribution and the creation of new channels on both broadband and cable."

Guimet also added that such a diversity of companies creates the perfect setting for finding co-production partners. "There are opportunities throughout the Florida Media Market where sales execs and producers can meet to screen their materials and hopefully, start a dialogue," she said. Indeed, last year's market successfully helped independent filmmakers find funding through organized pitching sessions, which will return this year (there are five total). For example, indie producer Paola Lopez (among many others) was given feedback and helped to find backers for her documentary *Pablo is Gone*, about infamous Colombian drug runner Pablo Escobar.

A host of independent production companies will be on hand screening their half-finished films and trailers in hopes of similar results. Florida-based production houses Stone Bridge Films, Sunset Pictures, Chaos Films and many others will get the opportunity to pitch to the professionals. As Guimet pointed out, one of the event's most attractive

elements is its indie-friendly environment. "What people see in our market has a lot to do with the opportunities for independent productions," she said.

FMM '08 also boasts a slew of brand new features, in addition to its 59 panels, roundtables and keynotes (slightly up from 58 last year). "This year, we've created an executive showcase room where execs can show their [filmed entertainment] material," said Guimet. Other improvements from last year include the opening night party, which will be held at Miami Beach's swanky nightclub the Havana Club, as well as an awards dinner, which promises to be a step up from last year's closing day luncheon.

Booths representing different countries are also a first for the market. The Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Peru, Chile, Colombia and others will all have stands on the convention floor manned by cultural attachés.

Another draw of the FMM is location. Guimet admitted that some of the event's popularity comes from its Miami Beach setting. "Miami is just more affordable than many other locales in the U.S.," she said, adding that its reputation as a "party town" and its gorgeous weather sweeten the deal for over-worked execs.

Additionally, Guimet pointed out that the downward spiral of the U.S.



FMM's Maritza Guimet

economy has, in a way, been a good thing for the fledgling market. "Everyone is complaining about the recession," she said, "But it's actually helped to bring in participants from Europe."

But while some companies from Europe and the U.S. will be in attendance, this year's FMM, like the two previous, will be dominated by firms from South America, Central America and the Caribbean. Although FMM takes place just one week after MIPCOM, Guimet contends that it is not overshadowed by the mammoth event, because it mostly serves Latin American companies. "Not everyone in Latin America can make it to MIPCOM," she said, adding that the market's timing, right on the heels of the conference in Cannes, actually works in its favor. "It's almost the end of the year, so FMM provides the perfect opportunity for companies to close deals made at AFM and NATPE. Plus, everyone is deciding what to purchase for the next year."

Nevertheless, some companies with major presences in Latin America still have trouble finding the time to attend both MIPCOM and FMM. Jose Escalante of Miami-based Dori Media (which is headquartered in Israel and distributes many telenovelas and other programs throughout Latin America) said that his team was forgoing the Miami mini-event in favor of the much larger MIPCOM, because it would not have time to regroup between the two. Although participation numbers at FMM are up from last year, a good number — about 75 companies — will exhibit in booths.

Latin heavy-hitters at the market will include Miami-based companies Venevision, Telemundo and Sony Pictures Television International. Esperanza Garay, senior vice president of Sales and Acquisitions for Telemundo, as well as Angel Orengo, senior vp of distribution for Sony, will give keynotes. **ES** ●

Left: The closing day luncheon at FMM '07



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## L.A. Screenings Extended

(Continued from Cover)



DIC Entertainment's Dan Waite screening in his suite at the Century Plaza

pilots. At the most, they got a Carsey-Werner T-shirt with the line:

"Carsey-Werner Wants 50% Of Whatever You Get When You Sell This T-Shirt On eBay."

At that time, the U.S. studios were already planning to invite buyers to various parts of the globe in the fall to screen their remaining crop of pilots.

While we're waiting to review the outcome of the L.A. Screenings' September sequel and to appraise its October preview, let's analyze the future of this 44-year-old purely organic market. This, however, cannot be done without looking at the state of affairs of the upfronts in New York. This is because the L.A. Screenings are a consequence of the upfronts. Without the upfronts, where the U.S. TV networks showcase their new seasons to ad agencies and clients with grand fanfare, there would be no L.A. Screenings, since new TV series would be introduced throughout the year (see related editorial on pg. 68).

According to *Ad Age's* Brian



At the MGM/L'italoAmericano joint party for the some 60 buyers from Italian-language TV networks, including those of Italian Swiss TV. L.-r.: MGM's Gary Marenzi, L'italoAmericano editor Mario Trecco, Italian Consul General in L.A. Nicola Faganello and the Consul's commercial attaché, Mariella Salvatori

Steinberg, at last May's primetime upfronts, the U.S. broadcast TV networks managed to increase their CPM (ad rates) even though ad revenues stayed flat as compared to last year. The \$9.2 billion committed to primetime broadcast TV for the 2008-2009 season was achieved by also offering more ad time, which was taken from the scattered-market inventory. In other words, the networks had to sell more to get last year's figures. It is unclear how the Fox TV network is reconciling the fact that, at the upfronts, it pledged to reduce commercial interruptions to 10 minutes per hour from the previous 18 minutes.

Usually, the nets sell anywhere from 75 to 80 percent of their primetime spot inventory up front, leaving the rest for the scatter market throughout the remainder of the broadcast season, which is generally sold at a premium for last-minute ad buys.

As far as the primetime CPMs are concerned, the New York-based Television Bureau of Advertising reported four types of rates floated by the networks: homes, 18-49, 25-54 and 18-34, with the latter being the most expensive at \$48, which translates close to 0.05 cents per viewer.

Steinberg also mentioned that not all nets are looking to do away with the upfronts, which, in effect, create a

bidding situation that results in ad rate increases. Fox, for one, is counting on the upfronts, which, understandably, are not favored by advertisers.

Nevertheless, for 2008, U.S. TV advertising has increased at least 3.2 percent for Anglo nets and up to 10.3 percent for the 75 Spanish-language cable networks (including the four over-the-air TV nets). This increase, compared to the previous year, is attributed mainly to the Summer Olympics and to the presidential election. The problem, however, is going to be 2009, for which New York-based ad analyst Jack Myers predicts that broadcast TV networks' total advertising will decline four percent to \$18.76 billion.

With this forecast looming, the networks have to decide whether to save some \$200 million a year in pilot production costs and risk lower ad-dollar intake, or to take a chance and fully restore the upfronts, hoping to generate enough expectations in May to bring up ad buys for the 2009-2010 season to at least four percent — the same level as 2008. This would result in another zero growth year, but in reality would represent a gain of about \$400 million just for primetime ad sales.

While preparations were taking place to extend L.A. Screenings '08 into the fall, arrangements for the 2009 main

event were being finalized, with dates already reserved at the Intercontinental and Century Plaza hotels. Independent companies will begin setting up starting Tuesday, May 12, with suites opening on the 14th, and peaking on the 15th and 16th. As usual, the studios will begin their screenings on May 17 and end on Friday the 22nd, just before the Memorial Day holiday.

Reviewing the May 2008 event, one has to say that it went especially well for indie distributors who, as usual, camped out at the Century Plaza and the Intercontinental hotels in the Century City part of Los Angeles. Exhibitors, who screened at their hotel suites, recorded an added flow of buyers who were, for once, not co-opted by the studios' all-day presentations. This time, the indies' main competitors were the shopping malls where buyers flocked, by virtue of the cheap dollar and American-style bargains. Parties were confined to a few thrown by the independents. In all, 81 independent exhibiting companies set up shop at the hotels.

Subsequently, London was deemed the preferred locale for the Screenings' sequel. For many studios like CBS Paramount, Disney ABC, NBC Universal and Fox, most of the screenings started the week of September 8. Warner Bros. and Sony were the only ones not screening, since they showed their entire crop of shows in May. New this year both at the Screenings in May

(Continued on Page 56)



CBS Paramount's Stephen Tague and Barry Chamberlain



L. to r.: WWE Latin America's Celso Forster and Emilio Revelo with president Carl Demarco



The Fremantle Corporation's Irv Holender

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## L.A. Screenings Extended

(Continued from 54)

and in September was ShineReveille International, the company resulting from the acquisition of Elisabeth Murdoch's London-based Shine of Ben Silverman's L.A.-based Reveille last February. At the L.A. Screenings in May, ShineReveille met with clients at both the Intercontinental and at their offices on the NBC Universal lot to present five



At the third annual L.A. Screenings Luncheon held at Century City's Intercontinental Hotel. L. to r.: WB's Rosario Ponzio, MGM's Gary Marenzi, attorney Anita First, Rigel's John Laing, Ascent Media's Jim Hannafin, FremantleMedia's Hendrik Van Daalen, consultant Peter Hughes, CEO Meetings' Neal Lloyd, consultant Tony Friscia, consultant Jim Marrinan, M6's Berengere Terouanne, VideoAge's Dom Serafini, M6's Bernard Majani



Heroes' star Masi Oka with NBC Universal's Allan Navarrette at NBC Universal's Century Plaza luncheon



At a press conference in L.A. in May, Globo's Raphael Correa Netto and Telemundo Internacional's Marcos Santana announced the remake of Globo TV's El Clone, a co-production with Telemundo



VideoAge's traditional L.A. Screenings' breakfast meeting

new pilots for its new CW Sunday night slate, but didn't have footage to show.

As far as the locations in London were concerned, Disney and Fox used their own in-house screening rooms, while ShineReveille rented Soho Screening Rooms (formerly Mr. Young's Preview Theatre), and NBC-Universal used the Soho Hotel's two cinemas (each at \$5,000 per hour at minimum). In addition, at MIPCOM, some studios, like Fox, will be taking a screening room for three days. "We'll screen the pilot episodes for people

who want to drop in and see them. This is the first time we've ever done that. But it was necessary given that we didn't have the opportunity to do so at the L.A. Screenings," commented Fox's Marion Edwards (see related comments on pg. 58).

Ireland-based RTE's Dermot Horan said that since the September Screenings' sequel took place over a couple of weeks, most buyers flew in twice, rather than staying in London for the duration.

Nonetheless, only a handful of buyers participated. For example, Holland's

Frank Mulder, who until recently acquired programs for NPO, reported that only two people attended from his former company.

From Italy, Sonia Danieli, who coordinates buyers from Mediaset, reported that some acquisition execs flew to Rome for Disney's September screenings, a few flew to London for Fox, while NBC Universal went to Mediaset's Milan offices.

What the Screenings' sequel means for the industry is still hard to tell. If it

worked well for those companies that opted to extend them at MIPCOM, it is possible that, in the future, it could become an added feature in Cannes. Even though there is a movement to have the Screenings moved to London in the fall, this eventuality is somewhat remote. More realistic, though, is the possibility that the upfronts will be restored to their past days of glory, and thus the May L.A. Screenings could continue uncut and uninterrupted indefinitely. ●



At Telefe's party. L. to r.: Argentina's Consul General in L.A., Ambassador Jorge Lapsenson, Telefe's Claudio Villarruel, Bernarda Llorente, Michelle Wasserman, Alejandro Parra, Julian Rodriguez, Jesica Stescobich and Meca Salado Pizarro



At the Latin America TV party. L. to r.: VideoAge's Monica Gorghetto, RAI's Bruce Rabinowitz, MGM's Sarita Salas and Jorge Balleste, and NATPE's Rick Feldman

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## Still Reeling From Strike

(Continued from Cover)

Paramount, decided to hold another round of pilot screenings in the fall (see related story on page 54).

Speaking to journalists at the L.A.-based TV Critics Association event over the summer, Fox TV president of Entertainment Kevin Reilly said, "We'll screen at least eight things in December [for advertisers] and coming out of that, I'd expect a couple of early series orders and a couple of things to begin queuing up. That's going to be the next step towards programming year-round, which we have been experimenting with for some time." He said the strike forced Fox to rethink its development strategy. "For us, it was an opportunity to finally kind of force the hand of something that we were trying to evolve towards anyway," he said.

"We're taking a screening room for three days at MIPCOM to screen pilot episodes for people who want to see them," said Twentieth Century Fox's Marion Edwards. "This is the first time we've ever done that. But it was necessary given that we didn't have the opportunity to do so at the L.A. Screenings." Edwards also added that the entire industry has been "waiting to exhale" since the start of the writers' strike last year, but that no one will be able to breathe easy until the threat of another strike — this time from the Screen Actors Guild (or SAG) — has been averted. "As soon as the Actors Guild reaches an agreement, we'll be able to return to a normal pattern," she said.

But when or if that will happen remains unclear. SAG's contract expired in June, but the organization, never one to pass up an opportunity for infighting, has yet to decide on a new agreement. Some studios are moving up

*After a 100-day Hollywood writers' strike brought the entertainment industry to its knees, each U.S. broadcast network had to rethink the way it did business.*

production on some series and films, while others are taking a wait-and-see approach. "I hate to even think about a SAG strike," said Edwards. "Not only for the disruption of my own business, but for all those people who won't get paid if they won't work. The industry will not benefit from another strike."

While talk of a possible SAG work stoppage has been on many minds, most people were still focused on the new TV season. At its upfront presentation in May, the CW network picked up just three new shows (*Privileged*, *Stylista* and an all-new *90210*), with president of Entertainment Dawn Ostroff saying, "We are zeroed in on our target demo of young women 18-34 with both new and returning series... We're confident that the quality of our shows for the fall season will make The CW the destination for young women."

But the netlet is speeding up its development cycle so as to shoot a number of pilots this fall... and possibly launch its 2009 season as early as next July instead of the traditional September. "The idea is to get out of the fray and be able to bring viewers where there's not as much competition," Ostroff told reporters at the TV Critics Association event. While in the past, networks have launched certain series a month or two before the time-honored

September start of the season, this will mark the first time that a broadcaster will launch its entire schedule that early.

According to Ostroff, the CW is still figuring out just exactly how this early launch might work, including whether or not the new season should commence in July or August and whether the early start to the 2009-2010 season means that the season would end in April (instead of the traditional May). She also said that the CW might need more midseason series to fill in scheduling holes.

At ABC's New York upfront presentation in May, network bigwigs announced that they were picking up just two new shows for fall (drama *Life on Mars* and game show/reality show hybrid *Opportunity Knocks*), but made it clear that although the strike forced them to think fast in order to turn things around come upfront time, the net was still looking into a number of other projects to bring to series. Though NBC recently faltered with *quarterlife*, its attempt at bringing a Web series to television, ABC is trying its hand at *In the Motherhood*, an online program that the net hopes to sculpt into a midseason comedy. The show stars *The King of Queens*' Leah Remini, actress Jenny McCarthy and E! talk show host Chelsea Handler as put-upon moms. The series, which launched on the Web in 2007, already boasts 21 million viewers, and ABC is hoping to capitalize on that popularity.

At the upfronts, Stephen McPherson, ABC Entertainment's prez said: "I'm a huge believer in the R&D of this business. The pilot process is the smartest possible investment you can make in your future" (see related comments on page 68).

In late August, ABC picked up five more shows, including *Castle*, *Cupid*, *The Unusuals*, *Better Off Ted* and *Single With Parents*.

The bigwigs at CBS also picked up two new comedies and three dramas in what can only be called the closest approximation to a normal upfront. New series included *Eleventh Hour*, *The Mentalist*, *The Ex*, *List*, *Worst Week* and *Gary Unmarried* (formerly *Project Gary*). The Eye network didn't give any indication that the strike slowed it down and hasn't yet said how it will proceed in the coming year.

The folks at NBC, on the other hand, decided to change things up a bit this year, announcing its entire 52-week schedule at an early upfront presentation, including everything from midseason entries to shows that won't air until next summer. The network also picked up shows such as comedy *Kath and Kim* and drama *Crusoe* without even having reviewed a pilot for either.

"The business is changing so rapidly and our clients expect us to stay one step ahead of that change," said Marc Graboff, co-chairman, NBC Entertainment and Universal Media



Twentieth Century Fox's Marion Edwards

Studios, at the time of the announcement in April. "So we're giving them the chance now to partner with us, start integrating with our shows from the very beginning and map out their strategies a full year into the future. It's an innovative way to introduce an innovative schedule."

A number of NBC's competitors scoffed at the idea that they were doing anything particularly ground-breaking, with Fox's Preston Beckman, evp, Strategic Program Planning and Research, telling the *Washington Post* that NBC Universal president and CEO Jeff Zucker "went out... and made proclamations and the other networks shrugged."

Regardless of whether or not NBC is proving itself a pioneer, advanced buzz for some of its shows, specifically *Crusoe*, from the U.K.'s Power, was overwhelmingly positive. And according to Chris Philip, president, Worldwide Sales, that can only mean good things for the indie company. "It's an enormous accomplishment for us to have gotten a scripted show on TV in the U.S.," he said. "When we're sitting at a table with clients and we tell them that we also have a U.S. network show, that gets their attention." In fact, Power has already pre-sold the series in over 43 markets, including Canal Plus in France, Channel Nine in Australia and TV2 in Hungary.

Whatever happens, the upcoming 2008-2009 U.S. TV season should deliver a number of midseason surprises, and offer some new shows that might have otherwise been cancelled early the chance to find an audience and blossom. It seems that despite the seemingly interminable work stoppage, Hollywood is more than capable of bouncing back.

On the following page you'll find a list of new U.S. TV pilots introduced in May, September and October. **LHR** ●



Dawn Ostroff at the CW upfronts



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## List of New Shows Shown and Not Shown in L.A.

List as of September 19. Shows in blue were announced after the L.A. Screenings.

### CBS PARAMOUNT INT'L TV

**90210** (CW)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Contemporary spin-off of the iconic drama.  
*The Cleaner* (A&E)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A recovering addict helps clients clean up their acts.  
*The Doctors* (Syndicated)  
Format: One-hour talk show  
From the creative team behind *Dr. Phil*, a source of reliable medical and health advice dispensed by a panel of physicians.  
*Harper's Island* (CBS) (midseason)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A murder mystery unfolds as friends and family attend a destination wedding on a secluded island.  
*Stylista* (CW)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Aspiring fashion assistants vie for a much-coveted editorial job with *Elle* magazine.  
*Worst Week* (CBS)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
About a man who'll do anything to please his girlfriend's parents... but becomes a human wrecking ball whenever they're around.  
**DISNEY-ABC INTERNATIONAL TV**  
*Castle* (ABC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A novelist helps police solve homicides.  
*Cupid* (ABC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Remake of a 1990s series about a man who claims to be Cupid and the shrink who treats him.  
*Gary Unmarried*, formerly *Project Gary* (CBS)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
About a dad trying to navigate new waters with his kids, his ex and his newfound romantic life.  
*In the Motherhood* (ABC)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
About the perils of parenting.  
*Legend of the Seeker* (Syndicated)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Based on the epic fantasy book by Terry Goodkind called *Wizard's First Rule*.  
*Raising the Bar* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A public defender tries to help the down and out.  
*Single With Parents* (ABC)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Alyssa Milano stars as a woman juggling family, friends and career.  
**FREMANTLEMEDIA ENTERPRISES**  
*America's Toughest Jobs* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Twelve people leave their safe jobs to pursue demanding ones.  
*Black Gold* (TruTV)  
Format: One-hour reality

Centers on the West Texas oil boom, where oilmen take big risks to get bigger rewards.  
*Merlin* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Fantasy series set in Camelot about the early days of Arthur and Merlin.  
*Shark Taggers* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Marine biologists track down and investigate ocean predators.  
*Spectacle: Elvis Costello With...* (Sundance)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Music talk show where legendary musician Costello plays host.

### ITV WORLDWIDE

*Chopping Block* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Couples are tested in various restaurant challenges.

### LIONSGATE

*Crash* (STARZ)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Based on the movie of the same name.  
*Scream Queens* (VH1)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Actresses compete against each other to see who makes the best horror movie victim.

### NBC UNIVERSAL INT'L TV DISTRIBUTION

*Kath & Kim* (NBC)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Molly Shannon and Selma Blair star in a sitcom about a 40-something divorced mom and her self-absorbed daughter. Based on the Australian series.  
*Kings* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
David and Goliath set in a meta modern world.  
*Knight Rider* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A modern take on the original series with a brand-new KITT and cast.  
*My Own Worst Enemy* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A middle-class executive lives a double life as a government agent.  
*The Office Spinoff* (NBC)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Spinoff of the hugely successful sitcom, with new faces and a new location.  
*The Philanthropist* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A billionaire helps those in need — often at great risk to himself.  
*The Rachel Zoe Project* (Bravo)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Celebrity stylist Zoe gives a fly-on-the-wall look at how she juggles it all.  
*The Real Housewives of Atlanta* (Bravo)  
Format: One-hour reality  
An up-close and personal look at lives in "Hotlanta."  
*The Real Housewives of New Jersey* (Bravo)  
Format: One-hour reality  
The lavish lifestyles of some of New Jersey's wealthiest wives.

### POWER

*Crusoe* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
New twist on Daniel Defoe's classic tale.

### RDF MEDIA

*Secret Millionaire* (FOX) (midseason)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Millionaires go undercover to some of America's most disadvantaged areas in search of everyday heroes.

### SHINEREVEILLE INT'L

*Easy Money* (CW)  
Format: One-hour drama  
About a family that runs a high-interest loan business.

*F.A.T. City* (CW)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Procedural drama set in Las Vegas.  
*The Goode Family* (ABC) (midseason)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Animated comedy about a family obsessed with doing the right thing.

*In Harm's Way* (CW)  
Format: One-hour reality  
In-depth look at the lives of people who perform dangerous jobs.  
*The Listener* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour drama

A suspenseful series that follows a paramedic who can read people's minds.

*Rita Rocks* (Lifetime)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
About an overworked housewife who starts a garage band.  
*Surviving Suburbia* (CW)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Bob Saget stars in this comedy about a family and its new neighbors.  
*Valentine* (CW)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A family of Greek gods tries to bring soulmates together, while keeping their own identities secret.

### SONY PICTURES TV INT'L

*The Beast* (A&E)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A veteran undercover agent partners with an up-and-coming FBI rookie.  
*Sit Down, Shut Up* (Fox) (midseason)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Animated show about the faculty at the most dysfunctional school in America.

*The Unusuals* (ABC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Centers on a quirky police precinct.

### TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX TV DISTRIBUTION

*Better Off Ted* (ABC)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Satirical office comedy about a worker trying to move up the corporate ladder.  
*The Cleveland Show* (FOX)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Animated series that follows *The Family Guy's* Cleveland Brown as he moves to Stoolbend, Virginia.  
*Dollhouse* (FOX)  
Format: One-hour drama

From the mind of Joss Whedon comes this action series about a female Jason Bourne.  
*Do Not Disturb* (FOX)  
Format: Half-hour comedy  
Multi-camera sex-com focusing on the help at a hip New York hotel.  
*The Ex List* (CBS)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A woman learns from a psychic that she's already dated her future husband.  
*Lie To Me* (Fox)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Deception expert can tell if you are lying  
*Life on Mars* (ABC)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Adaptation of a BBC series about a cop who wakes up 30 years in the past.  
*Sons of Anarchy* (FX)  
Format: One-hour drama  
An outlaw motorcycle club protects its small town against drug dealers, corporate developers and overzealous cops.

### WARNER BROS. INT'L TV

*Eleventh Hour* (CBS)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Focuses on a government agent who investigates scientific crises and oddities.  
*Fringe* (Fox)  
Format: One-hour drama  
An FBI agent, an institutionalized scientist and a Mensa member/high school dropout team up to identify paranormal activity.  
*Man vs. Cartoon* (truTV)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Real humans attempt stunts like those performed by *Looney Tunes* characters.  
*The Mentalist* (CBS)  
Format: One-hour drama  
A former celebrity psychic-turned-detective "reads" people and solves crimes.  
*Privileged*, formerly *Surviving the Filthy Rich* (CW)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Recently fired tabloid journalist tutors twin 16-year-old billionaire sisters.  
*Trust Me*, formerly *Truth in Advertising* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Two ad men have jobs and friendships that are increasingly on the line.

### INT'L DISTRIBUTOR TBA

*Angel City* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Features six cops in three cars during a single shift.  
*Delta Blues* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Tells the tale of an Elvis impersonator/cop who lives with his mother.  
*Leverage* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Timothy Hutton stars as a former insurance investigator who turns against corporate America.  
*Momma's Boys* (NBC)  
Format: One-hour reality  
Moms select brides for their complacent sons.  
*Morse Code* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
About a young war hero/DEA officer in Boston.  
*Opportunity Knocks* (ABC)  
Format: One-hour reality  
A game show that shows up on America's doorstep.  
*Tough Trade* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
Dramatic but humorous look at the Nashville music scene.  
*Untitled Ashton Kutcher/Tyra Banks Project* (ABC)  
Format: One-hour reality  
A beauty pageant unlike all others.  
*Untitled Joel Surnow Project* (TNT)  
Format: One-hour drama  
The life of an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. ●

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## Ex Execs Find Reel Work as Consultants

(Continued from Cover)

allowing for “good-quality” family time for those who still have kids at home or a tolerable spouse. For steady income, some American consultants, especially those in the Los Angeles area, also toil as expert witnesses in court cases involving disputes over contracts, libraries and the dollar value of content. And some even generate revenue by sitting on various media company boards.

“Consultants, as a rule, are unemployed executives with a certain skill set,” said Los Angeles-based Norman Horowitz, a former bigwig at MGM (and other studios) who’s worked in an advisor capacity since he was “thrown out” in the late ’90s at the ripe old age of 65. “People want to hire you to exploit that skill set,” he said, then continued: “People might also hire you out of fear. When an exec has just left his or her job, people think, ‘What can he do for me later?’ or ‘How can he hurt me later?’ They take my calls to make sure they’re covered.”

According to Horowitz, the word “consultant” is actually a misnomer. “They hire you to do a job, but it’s not every day all day. Few companies actually hire people to ‘consult,’ they want the consultant to actually do things for them on a part-time basis. They don’t want you to just consult.”

Horowitz didn’t mean to get into consulting. He just sort of fell into it. Shortly after his ouster at MGM, he took a trip to Australia with his son. “An independent movie producer said to me: ‘While you’re there, here’s a list of features I haven’t been able to sell Down Under, why don’t you try to sell them,’” said Horowitz. When he got there, the head of a network took a quick meeting with him — and agreed to buy six movies on the spot. “I made \$100,000 in 15 minutes,” said Horowitz. “They were buying my knowledge, my pedigree, my business expertise.” In addition to selling films to Aussies, Horowitz has also ventured to Hong Kong to hire a manager for an animation company and was recently retained by a concert promoter in Canada to “put some stuff together.”

While Horowitz only got into the consulting biz accidentally, others pursue it as if it were a regular job. In the late ’90s, Farrell Meisel served as managing director in the London offices of The Movie Channel. During his tenure, he was often approached by

competing companies for business advice. “I couldn’t do anything because of the conflict of interest,” he said. “But all the while I was amassing a large filofax of contacts.”

As he prepared to leave the The Movie Channel and the U.K., Meisel began fishing among those who’d expressed interest in his services. The first to bite was Turkey-based Ihlas Media. “I helped reposition them,” said Meisel, who’s currently working with the firm on another initiative. “They’re very enterprising people in a very conflicted part of the world,” he said.

As a consultant, Meisel sees himself as a jack-of-all-trades. “I’ve done everything. I’ve gone from department to department to examine [a station’s] workflow, or lack thereof. I’ve taken a look at every part of management and how each department is managed. When I go in, it’s usually to reengineer or reorganize — not necessarily to cut.”

Consulting has led Meisel to nearly every nook and cranny of the world — including Warsaw, Romania and the

differently. “When I got out of the day-to-day stuff,” he said, “I didn’t like where broadcasting was going — excessive advertisements, excessive repeats, etc. This way, I get to take what I’ve learned and be entrepreneurial... And I don’t have to go back to a corporate job.”

Whereas Meisel thrives on the fact that he gets to work for different companies in different cities on any given day, others loathe the lifestyle. “I’m not really doing an awful lot right now,” said a Los Angeles-based consultant and retired studio VIP who would rather remain anonymous. “I don’t want to spend half my life looking for work. I don’t like having to go out and sell myself.” Lucky for him, though, “clients always seem to come to me. My rep is out there. My work ethic is out there. People know that I know things. If, on the other hand, I was Joe Blow who worked in the back office of some indie for years, I’d probably have to actively stimulate business.”

On the very day that he left his job,



International consultant Farrell Meisel

Middle East — and he wouldn’t have it any other way. “It’s exciting,” he said. “It’s harder work than a full-time job because you’re working in so many different time zones at the same time.” He especially loves lending a hand to TV stations in emerging markets such as Eastern Europe. “There, a lot of the channels are only now coming out of the deep freeze of the Cold War,” he said. “They’re only now getting into the first generation of people who weren’t raised on Communist TV. The stations there have more of a desire to take risks and to try things. We don’t really do that anymore in the U.S.”

Meisel has heard the old adage that most entertainment consultants are retired studio bigwigs, but sees things

he got a call from a firm looking to establish its sales department. He liked having something to do, but “it was sort of intense,” he said. “Whether it’s eight days or eight weeks, when you’re a consultant, you just go go go all the time.”

For this consultant, the hardest thing about the gig is keeping as much up to date as you possibly can... now that you’re out of the day-to-day business dealings. “The challenge is to network, research and to stay in touch with the people who can help you stay current.”

Russ Kagan, a New York consultant who’s worked with companies such as Italy’s RAI, disagreed, saying that through consulting, he essentially gets a



“It’s no use being a consultant in the Netherlands,” said Frank Mulder, above, former executive at Holland’s Public TV Broadcasting

master’s degree every couple of years in where things are. “What I love about this business is change,” he said. “I’ve been very lucky to be able to go from distribution to launching channels to producing miniseries to mobile to digital to the net, etc. With each opportunity, I get to deal with different people and different companies. I thoroughly enjoy what I do.”

For the most part, Anthony Friscia, an Oak Park, California-based consultant, concurred. However, he said, “I’d prefer a regular job. There’s more stability there. Plus, with consulting, you don’t get bonuses such as medical insurance or a 401(k) [retirement fund].” Friscia, who began his career as a financial analyst at Viacom in 1975, and has served as a consultant for Twentieth Century Fox, among other companies, has recently become involved with Computer Applications Development (CAD), a Burbank software firm that created a computer system that studios can use to check the availability of a film or TV show’s rights in a given territory. Friscia, who cites his areas of expertise as finance and contracts, finds his line of work especially fulfilling when he gets in on the ground floor. “I see big things ahead for CAD,” he said.

Whether you’re reading contracts, picking apart a company’s silly hierarchical structure or selling films in all corners of the globe, when you’re a consultant, you might think you work for yourself, but you’re on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“I often tell people that I work nine to five,” said Kagan with a laugh. “But I mean nine to five in every time zone where I have a client!” ●

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## New TV Directives

(Continued from Cover)

significant ways. And, as member states begin the process of integrating the directive into their national law, *VideoAge* examines what this might mean for Europe's audiovisual industry.

The biggest single difference between the new and old directives is that, as its title suggested, Television Without Frontiers was concerned only with television. On the other hand, its replacement, as its name suggests, is concerned with all audiovisual media. Although as Mara Rossini of the University of Amsterdam's Institute for Information Law pointed out, "this includes neither services where the provision of audiovisual content is merely incidental to the service, and not their principal purpose, nor the press in printed or electronic form." Translated in plain language, this means that websites containing audiovisual material in an ancillary manner only, such as animated graphical elements, short advertising spots of information related to products and non-audiovisual services are excluded, as are online games, gambling and search engines. But the new directive most emphatically does include 'on-demand' services.

Having established the new, broader, scope of the AVMSD, "the next big questions," said director general of the Brussels-based Association of Commercial Television (ACT), Ross Biggam, "are over the timing and nature of what is implemented by each member state." Member states have a legal requirement to introduce the minimum provisions of the directive by December 2009. But with 27 states and 23 languages, it is, said Biggam, "an open question as to exactly what we will end up with and where and when we will end up with it."

An example of the way in which provisions may vary from country to country, is the question of the extent to which new media should be required to support local production. Despite a great deal of debate on the point (very much led by France), the European Parliament decided that it was too early to impose minimum quotas for European content on these emerging new media. Instead, the directive imposes a non-binding requirement that member states look at ways in which new media might support local production. While the French seem set



ACT's Ross Biggam

to introduce a levy on the turnover of the new media — possibly around one percent — to be contributed by the new media, Biggam remained "unsure how many others will go down that path." In other words, instead of saying VoD websites must offer a minimum amount of European content, the French are saying they will take a percentage of the websites' turnover revenues.

But perhaps the most obvious area of difference among member states is likely to be the decision to allow, for the first time, product placement on TV (it's always been allowed on film) within all genres except children's and news. Presently, EU countries don't all have the same amount of regulation on product placement.

Portugal, which looks set to be among the first of the member states to pass the directive into national law is, per Biggam, "setting an excellent example and seems to be planning to set very little down in legislation, leaving the industry to work out the details for itself" on product placement.

In Germany, on the other hand, several of the very powerful regional state governments (the Landers), are very opposed to any form of product placement and seem set to fight this element of the directive all the way, putting Germany in pole position to be the last country to pass the AVMSD into national law. Although Germany might not be the only state to fail to meet the December 2009 deadline, which Biggam described as, "something of a loose arrangement," adding, "if one or two states go beyond that deadline it is unlikely that anything much will happen. Even if they go way beyond the deadline, the worst that is likely to befall them is that they will be called before the European Court and asked to explain themselves. A fine is a very remote possibility."

The permitting of product placement grabbed all the headlines in the U.K., but, while welcoming their "more

liberal approach," ACT'S Biggam is dismissive, insisting, "it could have been better."

Nor does Biggam believe the impact of the introduction of product placement will be as big, either culturally or commercially, as some might have been led to believe.

Dismissing fears that advertisers will control every aspect of programs funded this way Biggam observed, "If you construct the program around the product, you will end up with a very bad program which no one will watch. If on the other hand you have a well crafted program into which the product fits nicely, then everyone will be a winner."

Biggam also doubted "product placement will ever replace [TV advertising] spots as a business model," and went on to say that, "certainly in the short term the changes to the rules governing the scheduling of spots will prove a much more significant gain than product placement or even any changes to the amount of advertising would have been."

The changes to which he refers are significant. With the exception of children's, news and movies, all previous regulations regarding the scheduling of commercial spots have been removed, and the requirement that movies run for at least 45 minutes between breaks has been shortened to 30 minutes — although the limit of 12 minutes in the hour remains. "This freedom to schedule spots pretty much as we want," insisted Biggam, "is a much bigger plus than any increase in tonnage would have been."

The rules on sponsorship remain unchanged, but the rules on telesshopping (home shopping) have been liberalized. Under the previous directive, a generalist channel was restricted to a maximum of three hours per day. That restriction has been completely abolished.

In another example of national derogation (i.e., when a country does something which is not in a directive and everyone turns a blind eye), a proposal to ban food advertising aimed directly at children was narrowly defeated, and is not in the AVMSD. However, such legislation has been introduced independently in both the U.K. and France.

All in all, there is no question that the AVMSD will have a significant impact on Europe's content business, but whether that will be a positive impact remains to be seen. As ACT's Biggam observed earlier, "we will have to wait and see what we get, and where and when we get it!" ●

## Europe's Film Commissions

(Continued from Page 18)

### UNITED KINGDOM

The U.K. Film Council's International Department (<http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk>) works as a part of the U.K. Film Council, the government-backed strategic agency for film in the U.K., established in 2000 with a \$43 million investment package. The money invested is government grants-in-aid and national lottery money. The aim of the U.K. Film Council's International Department is to ensure that the U.K. remains an attractive production base for international films. According to a report commissioned in 2008, the *Harry Potter* films led to a 120 percent rise in visitors to Northumberland's Alnwick Castle, and brought about \$17 million worth of tourism to the region. The report also said the effect lasted years for cult films such as *Trainspotting*.

John Woodward, chief executive of the U.K. Film Council, said: "British films and television programs play a powerful role in showcasing the U.K. to the rest of the world and boosting tourism. The strongest pull on tourists is from locations set at stately homes, historic and religious sites, and rural or village landscapes."

According to statistics dealing with films with production budgets of \$995,000 and above, production spending in 2007 totaled \$1.4 billion with the U.K. involved in the making of 112 feature films. The year 2007's total was lower than that of 2006, which with \$1.7 billion spent on production, was the second-highest year on record. The fall was influenced by the weak dollar against international currencies, the writers' strike in the U.S., and the effect of the structure of the new tax credit on co-productions.

Inward investment from international filmmakers — such as the major Hollywood studios — locating productions in the U.K., decreased by 13.9 percent in 2007 but still brought \$1 billion into the British economy (versus \$1.1 billion in 2006 and \$561 million in 2005). No films fell into the inward co-production category in 2007. Inward investment films included David Yates' *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Tim Burton's *Sweeney Todd*, Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight*, and Jean-Marc Vallée's *The Young Victoria*. ●

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# Conferences & Events News

## ASSN. FIGHTS OUTBOARDING

Recently, the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based International Association for Exhibition Management (IAEM) released a statement condemning "outboarding." The practice is defined as the "creation of a concurrent event that is related to an existing exhibition, but that is not sanctioned by the organizer and which seeks to benefit from the audience that the organizer attracts."

Gary Shapiro, president of the Consumer Electronics Association has been quoted as saying that "show managers should adopt a no-tolerance policy."

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# My Two Cents

**R**ecently, on a plane from Los Angeles to New York City I sat next to a graphic designer who proudly vented that, in the past few years, she had done away with her TV set, preferring instead to watch streaming videos on her computer. However, in order to watch movies and favorite TV series, she bought a video projector, because presumably, after a day of work staring at a 17-inch computer screen, she, like the rest of us, wants to enjoy some entertainment on a big screen. Indeed, television still means continuity, familiarity and, today, a big screen.

According to data from New York-based private equity investment firm Veronis Suhler Stevenson, in 2006, U.S. households spent more than eight hours a day watching TV, up from about six hours in 1975. So, while ratings for the big U.S. broadcast networks continue to fall — collectively they lost 3.4 million viewers in the past TV season — people watch more television than ever.

A similar development seems to be happening with the U.S. car industry: While consumers buy fewer cars and the cost of gasoline continues to increase, people spend more time on the roads driving. But I'm not surprised, considering that the U.S. car industry's focus has changed from years ago, when it was able to produce exactly what consumers wanted.

And, like the U.S. TV industry, the American automobile sector is becoming more creative with cutting costs than with its products. It's more adept at anticipating shareholders' whims than those of the buying public.

Let's make some comparisons. The U.S. automotive sector is a \$675 billion a year industry (based on 2006 figures for cars and light trucks) and the big three automakers (Chrysler, Ford and General Motors) collectively spend an estimated \$1 billion a year on prototypes, which constitutes 0.2 percent of their annual revenues of \$465 billion (2006 figures). The U.S. broadcast TV sector is a \$49 billion a year industry and spends \$200 million a year on its car prototype equivalent, pilots, representing 0.4 percent of its annual intake. And those figures are on the low end. If one considers cable, satellite, VoD, DVDs and other ancillary, such as in-flight programming, the TV sector's total annual revenue in the U.S. tops the \$100 billion mark.



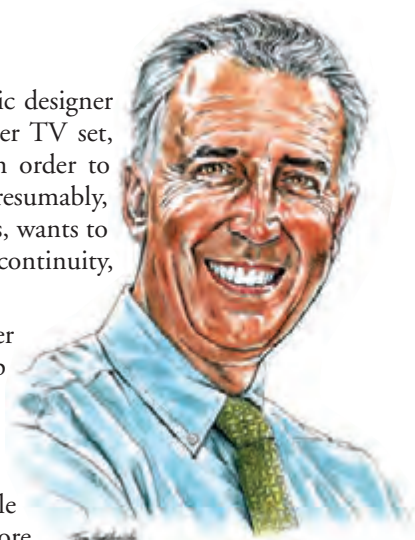
show? Granted, no one else in the world finds the need, like the U.S., to produce TV pilots. But no one else in the world annually generates \$49 billion in TV ad sales, then \$27 billion in domestic TV program sales (2006 figures), followed by \$5 billion in international TV program sales. If we take that argument, we're comparing apple and oranges.

Now a few executives of the network divisions of studio conglomerates want to change the game in order to save \$50 million each a year, but, in the process they risk making the whole studio-network concept of vertical integration crumble.

And not only that. A more risky outcome could be losses at the advertising revenue level, which is the only business model of TV networks, at least until IPTV takes hold.

At this point, I'd like to introduce a new concept, which has actually been in use since ancient Rome. Let's view "progress" as a return to a golden age of television and not as a forced march into the future. After all, a deliberate break with the past is not potentially creative. At times, innovation can become subversive, especially with the risky business of doing away with pilots. For example, how can both programmers and advertisers be able to judge if there is going to be chemistry between key characters? Plus, a sketch can look funny in the script, but be a total dud on camera.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not against unveiling new shows throughout the year so that they have better chance of picking up steam without the fierce competition often encountered in the fall. But it's one thing to improve on an existing model. It's another thing to change it completely for something unknown. Plus, I don't like surprises!



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